



# 2015 Recruiting Issue

THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

# HUSKERS

March 2015  
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ILLUSTRATED



Carlos

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**The next Huskers Illustrated edition, featuring the Football Yearbook and Spring Game recap will mail in late May.**

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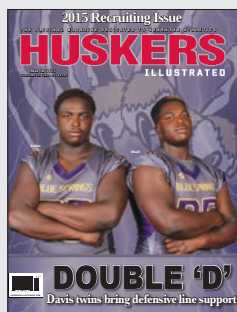
BY LANNY HOLSTEIN

Mike Riley has officially completed his coaching staff and media got to meet them at a press conference and later fans got to see them at the MSU basketball game Jan. 27.

## 2015 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME	TV/SCORE
SEPT. 5	BYU	MEMORIAL STADIUM	TBA	TBA
SEPT. 12	SOUTH ALABAMA	MEMORIAL STADIUM	TBA	TBA
SEPT. 19	@MIAMI	MIAMI, FLORIDA	TBA	TBA
SEPT. 26	SOUTHERN MISS	MEMORIAL STADIUM	TBA	TBA
OCT. 3	@ILLINOIS	CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS	TBA	TBA
OCT. 10	WISCONSIN	MEMORIAL STADIUM	TBA	TBA
OCT. 17	@MINNESOTA	MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA	TBA	TBA
OCT. 24	NORTHWESTERN	MEMORIAL STADIUM	TBA	TBA
OCT. 31	@PURDUE	WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA	TBA	TBA
NOV. 7	MICHIGAN STATE	MEMORIAL STADIUM	TBA	TBA
NOV. 14	@RUTGERS	PISCATAWAY, N.J.	TBA	TBA
NOV. 27	IOWA	MEMORIAL STADIUM	TBA	TBA

ALL GAMES ARE CST



## ON THE COVER

Twin brothers Carlos and Khalil Davis from Blue Springs, Missouri are two of the prized signees in Nebraska's Class of 2015, which included 20 scholarship recruits. The Davis twins stuck with the Huskers despite a coaching change, and the two defensive linemen will now follow in the footsteps of their uncle, Lorenzo Hicks, who played football for the Huskers in the 1980s.

PHOTO BY DEBBIE SQUIRES

## NEW FOOTBALL STAFF EMBRACES BIG RED TRADITION COACH MIKE RILEY APPEARS POISED NOT TO MAKE SAME MISTAKES AS PAST NEWCOMERS

**THE SUPER BOWL ON FEB. 1 OFFICIALLY MARKED THE END OF THE 2014 FOOTBALL SEASON FOR COLLEGE AND PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL AND SIGNIFIED THE START OF THE LONGEST SEVEN MONTHS OF THE YEAR FOR FOOTBALL FANS.**

Luckily here in Nebraska there has been plenty to talk about since the end of the football season on December 27 with the hiring of an almost entirely new football staff and most recently with the signing of their first recruiting class.

It has been interesting to watch how the new football coaching staff has adapted to their new surroundings in Lincoln given the fact that nearly all the new staff had no connection to the Huskers prior to being hired.

Unlike the Bill Callahan regime, which also didn't have a connection to Nebraska prior to being hired before the 2004 season after NU graduate and longtime assistant Frank Solich was fired, Riley and his new staff seem to be embracing the Husker tradition.

If you remember, Callahan and then athletic director Steve Pedersen had all of the old Husker football photos taken down and ties with former players were severed.

By breaking from Nebraska's storied tradition and not using it to their advantage, Callahan's resulting four years afterwards were a complete disaster and he ultimately was fired in 2007 by interim athletic director Tom Osborne.

Riley seems to have taken the exact opposite approach, which is a good sign.

Despite also being a head coach in the NFL with the San Diego Chargers between stints at Oregon State, Riley seems to look at being the head coach of



the Huskers as a privilege and is genuine in his approach to interacting with fans, players and recruits.

During his initial press conference, he visited with members of the Iron N student group and later sat in the student section at a basketball game.

In between sitting in the stands and being on the sidelines at the Holiday Bowl, he went live on the air on ESPN for a quarter of the Holiday Bowl loss to USC and also was a guest commentator on ESPN2 during the BCS Championship game.

It's almost as if men's basketball coach Tim Miles has been reincarnated as the football coach as accessible and outgoing as Riley has been thus far following his predecessor.

Who could blame him and his staff members?

They are like kids at a candy store with all the resources that they now have at their disposal - quite a step up from Oregon State and also quite a pay raise for most of his staff.

Hopefully after a year in the saddle, he will still be the same way.

However, by emphasizing NU's tradition and their own experiences the staff has been able to unite the Husker fan base for now.

More importantly, they were also able to sign a top 31 recruiting class nationally and top four class in the Big Ten Conference despite have just a month or so of contact with players.

It's nice to see that the staff is recruiting hard in areas like Texas and California that once were major pipelines during NU's glory years and all signs point to good things when the long drought from football ends with the spring game in April and then the real season on Sept. 5 against a tougher-than-normal foe in BYU on Sept. 5 in Memorial Stadium.

## HAVE FUN, AND GET SOMETHING DONE!

### Former Husker uses his past experience to help you excel

Troy Watchorn's passion for helping people started as a freshman Pre-Med student. The Columbus native had hopes of being an Anesthesiologist/Orthopedic surgeon, then his dad got sick with pancreatic/liver cancer.

"That changed the trajectory of my life," Watchorn said. "It turned me off from just being in a hospital and waiting for people who were sick to show up so I could help them, to being more pro active and help prevent as many issues as I could."

So Watchorn got a degree in Exercise Science and Physiology and with his background as an athlete, it helped him learn a lot and acquired a diverse set of training skills in order to help a wide range of clientele.

"My true passion is to help people function more efficiently, whether it be a young athlete, a weight loss client, someone who wants to relearn how to walk after a stroke, hip replacement or a knee operation," Watchorn explained. "We are all athletes and kids at heart, even if we don't play games or tackle and block people on Saturday and Sunday. We all want to have fun in life and continue doing what we enjoy doing whether it's hiking, biking, gardening or golf. We approach each day with the attitude to "Have Fun, and Get Something Done!"

Watchorn saw the lack of developmental youth programs in the area accompanied by his desire to develop the youth in the community led him to start T7 Fitness.

"A major focus of ours is testing the young athlete (ASI) Athletic Standard Index, which is the Gold Standard for testing



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any athlete. The roots of the (ASI) testing was established by Boyd Epley's and Mike Arthur's Husker Power's Performance Index which revolutionized strength and conditioning in sports," Watchorn said.

Watchorn was part of that revolution and it helped develop him from a walk-on who was sitting on the sidelines to a starting Blackshirt free safety on the No. 1 team in the country in 2000.

Over the past 15 years, the research and science involved with testing athletes has been better developed to not only help college and pro athletes but to help develop programs to take athletes as young as first grade to another level. Since Boyd's return to Nebraska, the university has recently started utilizing the (ASI) testing.

"We hear from athletes and parents of athletes of the need to get faster. Our first question is, 'How fast are you?' Not handheld



**Troy Watchorn**

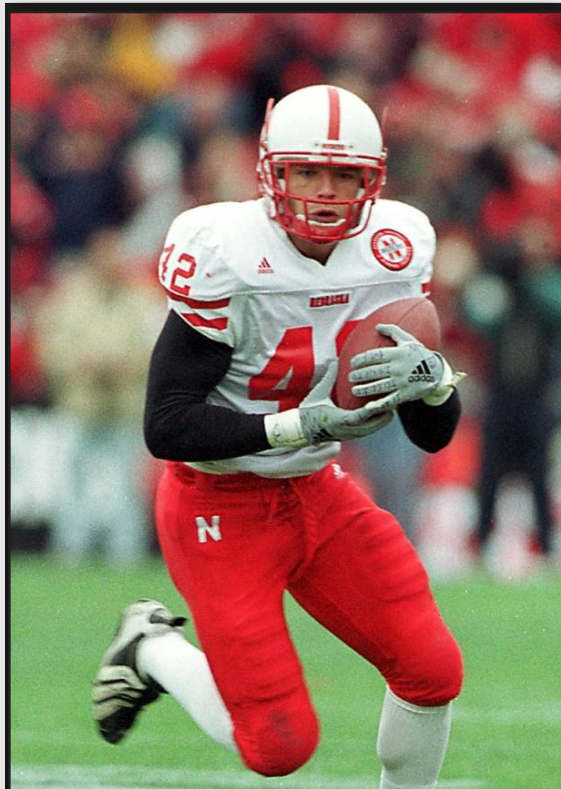
fast but electronic fast. Whether you are in youth, high school, college or pro sports, testing is the first step in establishing a baseline for every athlete," Watchorn said.

"We provide professional individual, small group (2-5), or team testing platforms for athletes on all levels which include (ASI) Athletic Standard Index, 40 yd. dash, 60 yd. dash,

Vertical Jump, Pro-Agility, etc. We develop customized programs for our clients, which include (rehab (spine/neck, hip/knee, shoulder surgery, weight loss, and athletes K-12, college and pro athletes). A large percentage of our clientele are young athletes."

T7 helps the athlete know where they are currently and gives them quality information to send and market themselves to college coaches throughout the country. They also help develop customized programs for athletes at all levels of sports.

"Think of the (ASI) as the ACT/SAT score for athleticism," Watchorn said. "You can't get into college without the minimum score and all colleges want to know what that score is. The higher the (ASI) score the more opportunities to go to college for free or at least a discount, no guarantee's of course. You can never be too athletic and it's never too late to increase your (ASI) Score."



*Owned by former Husker Blackshirt Troy Watchorn*

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# BOOKEND TWINS

Brothers Carlos and Khalil Davis were born to be football players

By Shane G. Gilster

Nebraska was searching for much-needed defensive line help in its 2015 recruiting class and was lucky to find two of the best in the country from the same high school.

Carlos and Khalil Davis are identical twins and came as a package deal for colleges. Even though Carlos was ranked higher than Khalil by recruiting services and had more honors during their prep careers, college recruiters and those close to them, pretty much viewed the brothers as the same in terms of talent.

If you look at their measureables (height: 6-2 to 6-3), (weight: 260 to 270), they are also alike. Even speed-wise, they both run between a 4.6 – 4.7 in the 40-yard dash.

“They are just equal kids,” said Blue Springs head football coach Kelly Dono-



hoe. “I don’t sometimes understand the recruiting rankings. The only reason why Carlos would be ranked ahead of Khalil might be because Khalil missed a few games with a knee injury and his numbers were not as good. If they didn’t wear different numbers on the field, I would never know who was the better football player.”

With Khalil missing some playing time because of an injury during their senior

season, Carlos had to step up and he did by taking his game to another level.

He played like a man possessed because opposing teams had to just focus on one twin instead of two. So to help combat that, the Blue Springs coaching staff moved Carlos around, lining him up at all four defensive line positions and even at outside linebacker.

Carlos had so much of an impact that when the team was struggling on offense half-way through the season, he was moved to offensive tackle to help jump start that side of the ball. He never played offense before, but he helped increase the offensive stats as well as provided a strong presence in the huddle.

For his efforts, Carlos won the Buck Buchanan award, an honor given to the most outstanding lineman or linebacker among Kansas City area big-class schools.





When Khalil came back, he also went to work on the offensive side of the ball, playing tight end. With both brothers playing offense as well as defense, Blue Springs advanced in the playoffs to the quarterfinals before losing to Rockhurst.

"It is like having another me out there," said Carlos when he and Khalil are playing on the field at the same time. "We play harder when we are both out there. We are competitive in everything we do. We push each other all the time to get better. One can never do better than the other."

Blue Springs high school is in the largest classification in the state of Missouri so Carlos and Khalil played against top competition week in and week out.

"They are tremendously disruptive players," said Donohoe. "Other teams didn't like playing them. They get doubled and even triple-teamed a lot. They always have reminded me of Warren Sapp (former Miami, Fla. and Tampa Bay player) but not with that personality. Just the explosiveness and how he would wreck the other team's plays. That is what Carlos and Khalil did for us."

Co-defensive line coach Nolan Hochgrebe said they used Carlos and Khalil

**"It is like having another me out there. We play harder when we are both out there.**

**We are competitive in everything we do. We push each other all the time to get better. One can never do better than the other."**

**Carlos Davis**

about playing with his twin brother

differently in their defensive schemes. Carlos was more of a strong defensive end and was there to run fit and to take on blockers, while Khalil was in their backside three technique and could chase things down.

"Because they are so fast they can play that defensive end position. But if you put one of those guys inside over the center than that is a mismatch and will cause opposing teams to double team them all the time," Donohoe said.

With their flexibility, it's no wonder that colleges started to recruit them early in high school. In fact Missouri offered

after their sophomore seasons.

"They can play any of those three positions (NT, DT, DE) along the defensive line. We knew they were going to be D1 players when they were sophomores. They were getting big and fast and we are a school that gets recruited pretty hard so we hear what the recruiters thought of them," Donohoe said.

### **A Wonderful, Bless-Filled Ride**

Carlos and Khalil would not be where they are today if it wasn't for their family. Mother Tracy and father Carl adopted the boys when they were nine months old.

"We have two older girls so they and I would do everything together but my husband would be stuck at home watching sports," Tracy said. "One day he said he wished we had a son to watch sports with. We always wanted to adopt so we got in touch with some case workers."

Tracy and Carl were asked if they would like to adopt twins. The agency wanted to keep two twin boys together, and up to this point they only had people who wanted to adopt one or the other. At first Tracy was hesitate, but then asked to see both boys.



"When I saw them for the first time they were wearing these little white sailor uniforms and were running around. One of my daughters grabbed one boy and the other daughter grabbed the other one and from there it has been a wonderful ride," Tracy happily said.

It didn't take long for the Davis family to notice their two boys had special athletic abilities.

"Their preschool teacher would always tell me how athletic the boys were," Carl said. "They could do back flips off the jungle gym bars and would race and beat all the kids."

Carl had always loved sports and wanted to give his sons every opportunity to develop their God-given gifts. So he got them into swimming, track and of course football.

"My husband got the boys in football during second grade. When he saw how much of an impact they had and how they liked to hit, he thought he might have something here," Tracy said. "Their second grade football coach Rob Jones said that we would see these boys playing on Sunday."

Carl needed some advice on how to nurture Carlos and Khalil in sports, so he turned to his brother Lorenzo (Hicks) who was a starting defensive back for the Huskers in the late 80's.

"He and his brother Lorenzo would always talk about what they needed to do next with the boys. One thing they taught them was that speed kills... it doesn't matter how big you are, it is how fast you are," Tracy said.

Carl took his sons to a football combine last summer and Carlos ran a 4.6 in the 40-yard dash and Kahlil was just a tenth of a second slower than his brother. Those times are impressive considering both are defensive linemen weighing in the 260 to 270-pound range.

Even though the Davis twins play against D1 talent in high school, if they are to make the jump and play as true freshmen at a place like Nebraska, they will have to use that speed more than their strength.

"It's all going to be mental for them along with skill set of hand placement and use of hands. When they get it all down and don't have to think and just react and play, that's when they become really special," Donohoe said.

Carlos and Khalil are already special



enough to have been able to earn full-ride scholarships to the University of Nebraska. They also are good enough to become dual sport athletes in college. Carlos led the nation in discus as a junior in high school and Khalil finished in the top 5. They would like to do discus and shot put in college if it is agreeable with the NU coaches.

"We never thought after adopting these boys at such a young age that they would take us on this wonderful, bless-filled ride," Tracy said.

### The Road to Nebraska

The Davis twins grew up knowing that Nebraska had a special place in their father's and uncle's hearts.

"My brother got hooked on Nebraska because I played there," Hicks said. "So after my playing days he continued to follow and support the Huskers. When Carlos and Khalil were in 8th grade I took them up to Lincoln to watch a practice, meet some of the guys, and walk through the facilities. They felt real comfortable and at home there because of that experience. So all of that combined gave them the Nebraska experience and got them interested in playing there someday."

Over the years Carlos and Khalil built a close relationship with the NU coaching staff, namely their defensive line coach Rick Kaczinski. So Husker fans were

thrilled last March when both brothers committed to Nebraska.

"When I knew they had D1 talent, I wasn't pushing Nebraska on them," Hicks said. "It was their decision and I would be happy with wherever they went."

When they committed to Nebraska, Tracy told Donohoe that she did not want any other colleges talking with her boys. So he honored her wish and would tell recruiters that Carlos and Khalil were hands-off and that no one would be talking to them.

"Word got out and people stayed off of them," Donohoe said. "If that didn't happen, then everybody and their dog wouldn't have been here talking to them."

At that point everything was going well for the Davis twins and the Husker football team. The Davis family took their official visit to Lincoln for the Miami, Fla. game in September. For Carl, a conversation he had with another recruit's father echoed in his mind again a few months later.

"I started talking with Eric Lee Sr. and I asked him which schools other than Nebraska did his son visit. He told me Colorado and Oregon State. Then he said if Oregon State wasn't so far away his son would be going there because of their head coach," Carl said.

"He is saying this back in September so we had no idea that Oregon State head



“When Carlos and Khalil were in 8th grade I took them up to Lincoln to watch a practice, meet some of the guys, and walk through the facilities. They felt real comfortable and at home there because of that experience.”

**Lorenzo Hicks**  
uncle to the Davis brothers and former Husker defensive back

Photo by Jamie Andrews

coach Mike Riley would be coming to Lincoln. Then after Pelini was fired and Riley was hired, I thought this was wild because I remembered what Lee Sr. had told me back in September.”

After the Pelini firing, Carlos and Khalil were very upset and on the advice of Donohoe, were on the verge of opening up their recruitment and taking other visits.

The Davis family was set to visit Missouri in December, but Riley made a move that saved the day for Nebraska and made the Davis twins reaffirm their commitment to the Huskers.

“Coach Riley contacted my brother Lorenzo first before visiting with us at our home,” Carl said. “Out of all these coaches who tried to get our boys to come to their school, not one contacted my brother to ask about them, so that left an impression on us.”

Hicks said when Riley called, he almost didn’t pick up his phone because it showed as an Oregon number and he didn’t know anyone from there. But something told him to answer it. Once on the phone, Riley gave him an idea of who he was as a coach and what kind of program he would run at Nebraska.

“He seems like a really good guy and seems genuinely concerned about the individual rather than just the football

#### DEFENSIVE STATS (2014)

	<u>Carlos</u>	<u>Khalil</u>
Games Played	12	10
Total Tackles	64	59.5
TFLs	33	25.5
Sacks	18	9.5
QB Hurries	21	7

player,” Hicks said.

Donohoe had a chance to meet with Husker defensive coaches (Hank) Hughes, (Mark) Banker and (Charlton) Warren and was impressed with them. He really felt that they were genuine and they were going to take care of their student athletes.

“Coach Riley is a good dude and he is a guy that is going to get good guys around him. After meeting with all of them I knew that Carlos and Khalil were going to stick with Nebraska,” Donohoe said.

#### Husker Ready

Most expect Carlos and Khalil to play as true freshmen. Nebraska needs to shore up their defensive line at every position and the Davis twins would not only provide depth but could be impactful.

“When Bo Pelini was here recruiting them last spring and while watching them do drills he said, ‘If we don’t mess

them up they will be Sunday players,” said Blue Springs co-defensive line coach Dave Podjenski.

Having played quarterback at the University of Kansas in the late 80’s, Donohoe knows what it takes to compete at the collegiate level. So when Carlos and Khalil step foot on campus in Lincoln, do they have a chance to play as true freshman?

“When they walk on the football field, they will be fine. I will be surprised if they are not ready to play right away,” Donohoe said. “I am more worried about them handling the school load... it’s just a big change for a kid. Besides classes, there is a lot to learn with new defensive schemes, so if they get redshirted they will be fine with that.”

One thing that Donohoe believes will happen when the Davis twins get to Nebraska is that Husker nation will embrace them on and off the field.

“In this day and age where you hear a lot of bad stuff about kids and athletes, it is refreshing that you get super star players that are really good guys as well. There is something about a Nebraska fan and a Husker athlete... they are just so intertwined. That is what makes Nebraska so unique. Nebraska fans want good people that represent the state the right way, and that’s what the Davis twins bring.”

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## CLASS OF 2015 SCHOLARSHIP RECRUITS

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	High School	Hometown	247Sports Rating	Position Rank
Lavan Alston	WR	6-0	170	St. Bonaventure	Oxnard, CA	***	(49)
Avery Anderson	ATH	6-0	170	Pine Creek	Colorado Springs, CO	****	(22)
Jalin Barnett	OG	6-4	315	Lawton	Lawton, OK	****	(8)
Mohamed Barry	OLB	6-1	210	Grayson	Loganville, GA	***	(71)
Alex Davis	WDE	6-5	220	William T. Dwyer	Palm Beach Gardens, FL	***	(90)
Carlos Davis	SDE	6-2	260	Blue Springs	Blue Springs, MO	***	(19)
Khalil Davis	DT	6-2	260	Blue Springs	Blue Springs, MO	***	(26)
Michael Decker	OG	6-4	285	North	Omaha, NE	***	(49)
Tyrin Ferguson	OLB	6-2	205	Edna Karr	New Orleans, LA	***	(91)
Christian Gaylord	OT	6-6	275	Baldwin	Baldwin City, KS	***	(37)
Eric Lee	CB	6-0	175	Valor Christian	Littleton, CO	****	(18)
Stanley Morgan	WR	6-0	185	St. Augustine	New Orleans, LA	***	(51)
DaiShon Neal	SDE	6-7	250	Central	Omaha, NE	***	(37)
Jordan Ober	LS	6-1	183	Bishop Gorman	Las Vegas, NV	**	(11)
Devine Ozigbo	RB	5-11	225	Sachse	Sachse, TX	***	(56)
Antonio Reed	S	6-2	210	Southaven	Southaven, MS	***	(149)
Matt Snyder	TE	6-5	245	California	San Ramon, CA	***	(30)
Adrienne Talan	ATH	6-1	195	Charles W. Flanagan	Hollywood, FL	***	(80)
Aaron Williams	S	5-11	183	Carver	Atlanta, GA	***	(42)
Dedrick Young	ATH	6-1	215	Centennial	Peoria, AZ	***	(49)

## WALK-ON RECRUITS

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	High School	Hometown
Fyn Anderson	DL	6-3	260	Lincoln Southeast	Lincoln, NE
Jared Brugmann	LB	6-2	225	Gretna	Gretna, NE
Brody Cleveland	LB	6-2	210	Ogallala	Ogallala, NE
Austin Hemphill	FB	6-0	220	Gretna	Gretna, NE
Reid Karel	QB	6-3	190	Seward	Seward, NE
Noah Johnson	RB	6-0	195	Sutton	Sutton, NE
Wyatt Mazour	ATH	5-9	190	Boone Central	Albion, NE
Jacob Weinmaster	LB	6-0	200	Loveland	Loveland, CO
Conor Young	ATH	6-1	170	Cozad	Cozad, NE

## LAVAN ALSTON

Wide Receiver • Oxnard, Calif. • St. Bonaventure High School



3-star recruit

247Sports Rating: 49

**Height: 6-0; Weight: 170**

**Analysis:** With all the injuries Nebraska had at the receiver position last season, it was imperative that they sign some wideouts in this class. Alston is an accomplished receiver with speed to burn, something NU needed after losing Kenny Bell. NU head coach Mike Riley established a relationship with Alston while recruiting him for Oregon State. If it wasn't for that connection, Nebraska would not have been on the receiver's final list of schools at the end of the recruiting process.

**Chose NU Over:** Arizona State, Arizona, Washington State, Boston College, Oregon State, California, Washington, Penn State

**Alston Quotes:** "I think I'm a perfect fit for this offense. They know how to put athletes in space. They can get their athletes the ball. Nebraska is known as a running school but we're going to be an air attack school as well. I think we're going to do great things here."

**High School Head Coach Adam Guerra on what kind of player and person is Lavan?**

"I only coached Lavan for one year. I was surprised that Lavan committed to Nebraska. I thought he would stay out West but with coach Riley coming from Oregon State that obviously had an impact on Lavan. He is a fast receiver and every offense can use one of those. He is used to a complex offense and can pick it up easily so that will help him at Nebraska. He likes to train year round and be an athlete twelve months out of the year. He isn't a small guy who can only play in the slot... he has the speed to line up on the outside to. He is kind of like Antonio Brown from the Steelers. He can do some stuff on the inside but makes a living on the outside. He needs to get used to playing in the Midwest in cold weather, but that is a big adjustment for any California kid. One of the things that might separate him at Nebraska besides his top-end speed, is that he is a pretty good blocker."

**Do you think Lavan has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"I think he would be best served redshirting. He had some nagging injuries that held him back in the weight room but played through them on the field."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

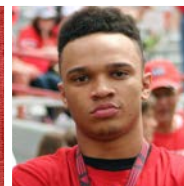
"I think Mike Riley is an outstanding person. I hope my son could play for a guy like him in the future. He is genuine and clear-spoken... not a salesman like some college coaches are. He has a strong philosophy on offense and defense but he adjusts to the talent he has. That is a great hallmark for a college coach to have."

*By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports*

247Sports

# AVERY ANDERSON

Athlete • Colorado Springs, Colo. • Pine Creek High School



4-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 22



Photo by Clifton Photography

**Height: 6-0; Weight: 170**

**Analysis:** Anderson is the type of player you want in your defensive backfield. Smart and skilled, he can play either cornerback or safety. Nebraska can use that versatility and will find the best fit to maximize his talent. A bit on the slight side, Anderson will benefit enrolling in January and participating in spring football.

**Chose NU Over:** Arizona State, Kansas State, Utah, Wyoming

**Anderson Quotes:** "Coach Riley told me on his home visit that they definitely want to see me at cornerback. Then maybe they'll bounce me around to see me at nickel or maybe at safety. I'm excited for that opportunity. I'm ready to do whatever for the team. If they want me to hand out water I'll do that. I'm excited for whatever I can do to help the team to win."

**High School Head Coach Todd Miller on what kind of player and person is Avery?**

"He is a complete person and a complete football player. He is as good a football player and as a person as we ever had here. He got more vocal and assertive each year that he was here. He did everything well on the field whether playing offense or defense. He was versatile player, playing wide receiver, returning kicks, safety and cornerback. I thought he was

a better defensive player. He had ability to secure the edge and make the tackle. It depends how his body grows at Nebraska whether he plays corner or safety. The last two years here he played safety. His tackling skills and ability to get guys on the ground was what he was best at. He was the quarterback of our defense getting everybody lined up correctly. Nebraska fans are going to see a kid that cares about his community, being the best he can be on and off the field. He is going to wear that N with a purpose and a pride and do everything in his power to bring Nebraska back some championships."

**Do you think Avery has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"I don't know what Nebraska's scheme will be or what they already have on the depth chart. So I can really say either way."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?** "This was the first time I ever met him. I was highly impressed. He is just a down to earth guy. He made me feel really comfortable. He was a gentleman, and was as nice a human being that I ever met. He just had such an impact on me from our first meeting. If Nebraska ever recruits a kid from this high school again, I would be honored if they would play for coach Riley."

By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports

# JALIN BARNETT

Offensive Guard • Lawton, Okla. • Lawton High School



4-star recruit

247Sports Rating: 8



Photo by Janice Leon/Lawton, OK

**Height:** 6-4; **Weight:** 315

**Analysis:** Barnett comes from a high school that has given NU one of its greatest offensive linemen in program history. Former All-American and NFL Hall of Famer Will Shields hails from Lawton High School and Husker fans are hoping Barnett will be the second coming. Out of all the Nebraska recruits in the 2015 class, Barnett was the one that rated the highest in the recruiting rankings. With schools like Alabama offering this outstanding lineman, Nebraska hit a home run with his commitment.

**Chose NU Over:** Arkansas, Alabama, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Stanford, Oregon State

**Barnett Quotes:** "Coach Cavanaugh and Coach Riley have been talking to me for a couple years now. I was actually being recruited by Oregon State. Coach Cav and I have a good relationship and I know if he coaches me, he'll coach me hard and he'll help make me who I want to be."

**High School Assistant Coach Ryan Breeze on what kind of a player and person is Jalin?**

"He is the best we have had since I have been here and we've had some good ones. He moves his feet really well and has long arms. He played tackle for us but will really excel as a college guard. He is meant for a pro style offense. Oregon State was the first to offer him and they compared Jalin to D'Brickashaw Ferguson (Pro Bowler who plays for the New York Jets). We have never had a freshman start but he was the No. 2 right tackle then has started since his sophomore year. He has a mean streak when he is on the field, he gets after it and is very competitive. He has a 3.7 GPA so there are no issues in the classroom with Jalin."

**Do you think Jalin has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"I really think he could play as a true freshman. He has the strength and has all the tools. If he doesn't start he will definitely push for playing time."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

"He is an awesome guy. He is as good a guy as there is. He is also a heck of a coach because it isn't easy to recruit to Corvallis, Oregon and is a really sharp Xs and Os guy. We are excited to see what he can do with the caliber of athletes he will have at Nebraska."

By Shane G. Gilster/  
Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports

# MOHAMED BARRY

Outside Linebacker • Loganville, Ga. • Grayson High School



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 71



Photo by Magic Moment Photography

**Height: 6-1; Weight: 210**

**Analysis:** Nebraska's defense wants to have a more attacking style, so they went looking for defensive players that would give them that. None looked better on film than Mohamed Barry. He was a disruptive force in high school and played with a reckless abandon that made him a perfect fit for NU. Barry just needs the right coaching refinement in college to harness his enormous potential.

**Chose NU Over:** Miami Fla., Kansas State, Syracuse, N.C. State, South Florida, Georgia State, Appalachian State

**Barry Quotes:** "I feel like bringing some southernness to Nebraska, which is going to help them compete with the Ohio States and Wisconsin. That's what this coaching staff coming from Oregon State wanted - they wanted to recruit the south but they didn't have the power program to do it. Now they're at Nebraska so they feel like 'We're Nebraska. We're a big name.'"

**High School Head Coach Mickey Conn on what kind of player and person is Mohamed?**

"I think a lot of schools missed the boat on Mohamed. He is a great player and ranks right up there among the best we have had since our school started in 2000. He is a very passionate and high-energy player... a very explosive, hard hitter. Having played at Alabama, I can compare Mohamed to a Cornelius Bennett or Derrick Thomas. A linebacker that can come off the edge and just wreaks havoc. We played him at inside linebacker his junior year but I think he is at his best at coming off the edge and playing underneath in zone coverage."

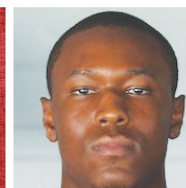
**Do you think Mohamed has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"He is going to have a big learning curve and adapt to the speed of the game in college. If he doesn't get overloaded with too many schematics and just let him go out and play football, I think he can be great and even start as a freshman. I'm sure if nothing else they will use him on special teams."

By Shane G. Gilster/  
Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports

## ALEX DAVIS

Weakside D-End • Riviera Beach, Fla. • Dwyer High School



3-star recruit

247Sports Rating: 90

**Height: 6-5; Weight: 220**

**Analysis:** Davis is an extremely raw athlete in terms of football. More of a basketball player in high school, he only played varsity football as a senior. Comparisons to former Husker Randy Gregory are likely after watching his film. If NU can develop Davis properly, he has a chance to a disruptive force like Gregory was from the defensive end or outside linebacker position.

**Chose NU Over:** Georgia Southern, Pittsburgh, South Florida, FIU, Florida Atlantic, Temple, Middle Tennessee State

**Davis Quotes:** "I knew what Nebraska had to offer. It was kind of quick, but once I got out here and saw everything, my parents did too, we all got wiled up. Coach (Hank) Hughes is very cool and talking with him, he explained where he wanted me to play. I really like how he wants me to play and everything. He thinks I have a lot of potential."

**High School Head Coach Jack Daniels on what kind of player and person is Alex?**

"Nebraska is getting a phenomenal young man. He is just beginning to tap his potential as a football player. He has all the physical skills as some of the best we've had at this school. I was always trying to get Alex to play football for me but his main sport was basketball and all these AAU coaches told him not to play football. But he finally felt comfortable enough to give football a shot as a senior. After spring football I knew he was going to be a D1 kid. I can see similarities to Jason Pierre-Paul (New York Giants). He was a Florida kid who only played a little bit of football in high school and developed later."

**Do you think Alex has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"He will probably redshirt. The game of football is still new to him and with all the spread offenses and zone reads in college, he won't be able to play with the speed he wants to. It will also give him a chance to put some weight on. Right now he is 220 pounds so he should get up to at least 250. He has a beautiful frame on him to be able to put the weight on."

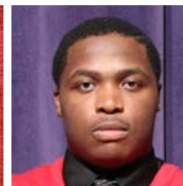
By Shane G. Gilster/  
Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports



Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Post

# CARLOS DAVIS

Strong-Side D-End • Blue Springs, Mo. • Blue Springs H.S.



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 19

**Height: 6-2; Weight: 260**

**Analysis:** Davis was a one-man wrecking crew on defense for Blue Springs high school. When twin brother Khalil went down with an injury and missed some weeks, Carlos took his game to another level. He won the Buck Buchanan Award given to the top large-class lineman or linebacker in the Kansas City area. Don't be surprised to see Davis make his way on the field as a true freshman at any of the defensive line positions.

**Chose NU Over:** Missouri, Arizona State, Kansas, Kansas State

**Davis Quotes:** "I expect to play right away and coach (Hank) Hughes told me he expected me to play right away. I want to get a one-digit number but if not I would like to stick with my high school number (96). Maliek Collins is the leader of the Nebraska defensive line and he wears number 7 so that is the reason why I want a number like his."

**High School Head Coach Kelly Donohoe on what kind of player and person is Carlos?**

"Carlos and his brother Khalil have been the most special players Blue Springs has produced since I have been here. It's not that they are just great players but that they are twins and are really loved by our school. They turn their motors on when they are on the field and then become great kids off of it. In this day and age where you hear a lot of bad stuff about kids and athletes, it is refreshing that you get super star players that are really good guys as well. Everything they do is equal. If they didn't wear different numbers on the field, I would never know who was the better football player. Because they are so fast they can play that defensive end position. But if you put one of those guys inside over the center than that is a mismatch and will cause opposing teams to double team them all the time. So they can play any of those three positions (NT, DT, DE) along the defensive line."

**Do you think Carlos has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"I am more worried about Carlos and Khalil handling the school load. It just a big change for a kid going to college. I will be surprised if they are not ready to play right away. But there is a lot to learn in a new defensive scheme so they might very well get redshirted and they will be fine with that. They will just get 15 pounds heavier and stronger for the next year. It's all going to be mental for them and skill set with hand placement and the use of hands. When they get it all that down and don't have to think and just react and play, that's when they will become really special."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

"I wanted Carlos and Khalil to make sure Nebraska was the place for them. Coach Riley is a good dude and he is a guy that is going to get good guys around him. After meeting with him and some of the other defensive coaching staff, I knew that Carlos and Khalil were going to stick with Nebraska."



Photo by Brian Davidson/The Examiner

By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports

**KHALIL DAVIS**

Defensive Tackle • Blue Springs, Mo. • Blue Springs H.S.

**3-star recruit**

247Sports Rating: 26



Photo courtesy of Debbie Squires

**Height: 6-2; Weight: 260**

**Analysis:** Not as highly-rated as brother Carlos because of an injury that forced him to miss some time during his senior season, but his coaches feel he is just as good. It is just a matter of where NU sees him best suited along the defensive line. Like Carlos, Khalil can play anywhere along the defensive front which makes him a very valuable player.

**Chose NU Over:** Missouri, Arizona State, Kansas, Kansas State

**Davis Quotes:** "Once we saw what Nebraska was like, that's when we decided we wanted to go there. They just made you feel at home. This staff is fun to talk to and coach Riley is a really nice guy so it's hard not to like him. Coach (Hank) Hughes has a fierce side to him but also a funny side as well."

**High School Head Coach Kelly Donohoe on what kind of player and person is Khalil?**

"Khalil and his brother Carlos have been the most special players Blue Springs has produced since I have been here. It's not that they are just great players but that they are twins and are really loved by our school. They turn their motors on when they are on the field and then become great kids off of it. In this day and age where you hear a lot of bad stuff about kids and athletes, it is refreshing that you get super star players that are really good guys as well. Everything they do is equal. If they didn't wear different numbers on the field, I would never know who was the better football player. Because they are

so fast they can play that defensive end position. But if you put one of those guys inside over the center than that is a mismatch and will cause opposing teams to double team them all the time. So they can play any of those three positions (NT, DT, DE) along the defensive line."

**Do you think Khalil has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"I am more worried about Khalil and Carlos handling the school load. It just a big change for a kid going to college. I will be surprised if they are not ready to play right away. But there is a lot to learn in a new defensive scheme so they might very well get redshirted and they will be fine with that. They will just get 15 pounds heavier and stronger for the next year. It's all going to be mental for them and skill set with hand placement and the use of hands. When they get it all that down and don't have to think and just react and play, that's when they will become really special."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

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By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports



## CLASS OF 2015

# MICHAEL DECKER

Offensive Guard • Omaha, Neb. • North High School



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 49

**Height:** 6-4; **Weight:** 285

**Analysis:** Decker is an Omaha kid who should make his hometown proud during his career at Nebraska. Built to play in the interior of the offensive line, he should have a nice career after a redshirt year will prepare him for the physical Big Ten defenses.

**Chose NU Over:** Kansas State

**Decker Quotes:** “Coach (Mike) Cavanaugh is going to be a great guy to play for and he’s a tough coach which is not a bad thing. I think he’ll help me along the way both football wise and life wise. I think what we will do in football can translate into other things. I think he’s a technique coach. He loves his players, but he’ll yell at them too. That’s not a bad thing. We’ve gotten along great.”

**High School Head Coach Larry Martin on what kind of player and person is Michael?**

“Michael has a great work ethic having been on the line since a sophomore. The thing that always stuck out to me with Michael was his toughness. He wants to embarrass you if he can. That is not his normal temperament but it is when he’s on the field. He is very humble and didn’t think he would ever be this good. Being a Nebraska kid, everybody pretty much backed off recruiting him when he committed. He’s pretty quiet but is a student of the game. He isn’t going to take anything from anybody. He is in that elite group of lineman I have had here at North.”

**Do you think Michael has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

“I think he will redshirt. The Nebraska coaches have talked with him about playing either center or guard. Michael is an inside offensive lineman, he doesn’t have the size to play tackle.”

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

“He is very thorough and humble. He did a great job of coming in here and putting Michael’s mind at rest in coming to Nebraska.”

By Shane G. Gilster/  
Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports



Photo courtesy of JohnsBestShots.com



# TYRIN FERGUSON

Outside Linebacker • New Orleans, La. • Edna Karr H.S.



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 91

**Height: 6-2; Weight: 205**

**Analysis:** Ferguson comes from a high school that is known for producing football talent. Ferguson may not be as highly-rated by recruiting services, but talent-wise he has a high ceiling. Nebraska coaches like his athleticism and flexibility to be able to move him around on defense. Ferguson fits a need for NU and the style of attacking defense it will incorporate.

**Chose NU Over:** Houston, Oregon State, Troy

**Ferguson Quotes:** *"I like the coaches at Nebraska, and the new facilities. The resources out there help you get better and that is what sets it apart from any other school. It's like a family and we have to bond together for the next four or five years."*

**High School Head Coach Bryce Brown on what kind of player and person is Tyrin?**

*"Tyrin will give you 100% every time on and off the field. He is a well-rounded individual with great character and was one of our team captains. I was the offensive coordinator this past season and he played a little tight end in some heavy packages. On defense he played defensive end and outside linebacker. Colleges liked his motor on the field, he is just relentless. He can pursue the quarterback and executes his assignments in the run game. I would compare him to a Clay Matthews (Green Bay Packers) in that he can rush the passer but also drop back in pass coverage. He has only played varsity football for two years so he has great upside. He fits the mold of the great players we have had here. Tyrin is in that list of elite defensive ends from our school."*

**Do you think Tyrin has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

*"Not too many kids have Tyrin's mindset, he is just a go-getter... he does what he has to do. So he has an opportunity to play early."*

*By Shane G. Gilster/  
Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports*



247Sports

**CHRISTIAN GAYLORD**

Offensive Tackle • Baldwin City, Kan. • Baldwin High School

3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 37

Photo courtesy of Baldwin High School

**Height: 6-6; Weight: 275**

**Analysis:** Gaylord has the size and skill-set to become a staple at the tackle position for at least three years at Nebraska. A redshirt year would benefit him as he gets bigger and develops the technique needed to take on college defensive linemen. Look for Gaylord to make a name for himself in Lincoln and continue the tradition of great offensive linemen for the Huskers.

**Chose NU Over:** Kansas, Kansas State, Iowa State, Minnesota

**Gaylord Quotes:** "Nebraska just felt like a good place, a great place. My family has been a fan all of their lives and I have too. It's been kind of just like a dream ever since I was a little kid. I just felt like it was the place to be and the time was right. It just came naturally. I love to get down and dirty on the offensive line."

**High School Head Coach Mike Berg on what kind of player and person is Christian?**

"I have been the head coach here for 17 years and Christian is one of the top five linemen that I have ever coached. He was only the third kid to have ever started as a true freshman for us. He did not miss a game

over his four years. He played both defense and offense his junior and senior years. He is kind of a quiet kid but is really focused on what he needs to do. The one thing we wanted to work on with him was his demeanor on the field, he didn't display much emotion but got better as a senior. He would be a great left tackle in college as he protects that blind side of the quarterback really well."

**Do you think Christian has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"That is a great question for coach Riley. If it was me, I would redshirt him. I think Nebraska will have players on the offensive line that will be more ready to play. I think Christian needs to get bigger and more physical. If he gets up to 315 to 320 pounds... that would be perfect for him."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

"Coach Riley is a top-notch guy. Family-first and was all about team. He is a Christian man and all about morals. I think he is a great fit for Nebraska. Christian was just ecstatic after he met him and got to know who the real Mike Riley is."

By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports

## ERIC LEE JR.

Cornerback • Highlands Ranch, Colo. • Valor Christian H.S.



4-star recruit

247Sports Rating: 18

**Height: 6-0; Weight: 175**

**Analysis:** Lee Jr. is a good bet to forgo a redshirt year and play as a true freshman. He has the flexibility to play corner, nickel or safety, and with the need for more help in the defensive backfield, Husker fans should see this talented player on the field immediately. Being able to enroll this past January and going thru spring camp will only further his playing chances.

**Chose NU Over:** Arizona State, Colorado, Colorado State, Oregon State

**Lee Jr. Quotes:** "I like coach Riley a lot. He's a big believer in the Lord and we talked about that and I got to see what he envisions the program to be, and I extremely agree with the vision he has for the program. I just knew it was the place for me and then I was able to keep up with the team throughout the whole year. Now it's my turn to be a part of Nebraska's legacy and tradition."

**High School Head Coach Rod Sherman on what kind of player and person is Eric?**

"He was our best player so he needed to be the leader of our team. On the field he became a person we could use in a lot of different situations. He was our leading receiver and played running back. On defense he had the responsibility of covering the other team's best player and did it extremely well. He became physical and a sure tackler on the field this year. He became better being a press corner and understanding the routes and his leverage. His position coach here was Brian Dawkins who had a long NFL career and I can see Brian's coaching rub off on him. Eric the best corner that I have ever coached and he will always be remembered as one of the greatest here at Valor. He will mesh in great with the high character program Coach Riley wants to run at Nebraska. That's one of the reasons why he chose to go to college at a place like the University of Nebraska."

**Do you think Eric has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"I think he has a chance to play right away. I think he's got the ability because he is such an excellent cover corner but he is also physical enough to be a safety. I think he can play either position... it depends on the depth of the guys around him. With today spread offenses your safeties have to cover just as well as the corners do."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

"One of our players went to Oregon State two years ago, so we have gotten to know Coach Riley. I think you have an exceptional man as your coach."

By Shane G. Gilster/Huskies Illustrated & 247Sports



Photo courtesy of Valor Christian High School

## CLASS OF 2015

# STANLEY MORGAN

Wide Receiver • New Orleans, La. • St. Augustine H.S.



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 51

**Height: 6-0; Weight: 185**

**Analysis:** Looking at his offer list, you can see right away what kind of player Morgan is. He was thought of very highly by some of the top programs in the country. So to have been able to pull him out of SEC country is a credit to both the old and new coaching staffs at Nebraska. The Huskers are in desperate need to bolster its receiving corps for a gradual change to more of a pro-style offense. Morgan gives them a future difference maker but also is a viable option to see the field as a true freshman.

**Chose NU Over:** Clemson, Florida, Georgia, Houston, Ohio State, Michigan State, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, UCLA, Tennessee, Tulane

**Morgan Quotes:** "When I went through the academic tour, it really showed me that I could be more than just football. I like the fit on offense. They are not selfish. When they can run they will run and when they can pass they will pass. They like me as an "X", but I think that I can play both spots."

**Athletic Director Marcus DeLarge on what kind of player and person is Stanley?**

"He may be one of the best receivers to have ever come through this school. Stanley's hands are just extraordinary, he just doesn't catch the ball, he snatches it out of the air. He has a leaping ability that is second to none and he is really quick off his feet. He catches the ball at its highest point... he doesn't let it come to him, he goes and gets it. I would compare him to an Anquan Boldin (San Francisco 49ers) type. A strong receiver who can throw defenders off of him if need be. He isn't afraid to go across the middle and catch the ball."

**Do you think Stanley has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he red-shirt?**

"He has a good head on his shoulders. He'll be able to grasp Nebraska's offense and our wide receiver coach did a good job of preparing him. He is a big, strong and physical wide receiver so he can handle playing in the Big Ten."

By Shane G. Gilster/  
Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports



247Sports

# DAISHON NEAL

Strong-Side D-End • Omaha, Neb. • Central High School



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 37



Photo courtesy of JohnsBestShots.com

**Height: 6-7; Weight: 250**

**Analysis:** Even though Neal didn't live in Nebraska all of his life, he was a recruiting priority by the Husker coaches. At 6-7, 250 pounds, he is compared to the likes of Randy Gregory or even Neil Smith who played for NU in the 1980s. His physical abilities are second to none and once he gets involved in Nebraska's strength and conditioning program, he could develop in something really special.

**Chose NU Over:** Michigan, Oklahoma, Iowa, Arkansas, Oregon

**Neal Quotes:** "I had a good relationship with the old coaching staff. So I opened up my recruitment to be on the safe side but did not decommit from Nebraska. But in the end there was no place like Nebraska. On my Nebraska visit I got to meet the guys that were already enrolled like Avery, Eric, Aaron and Dedrick. It felt like I already had my family in Lincoln."

**High School Head Coach Jay Ball on what kind of player and person is DaiShon?**

"He is certainly one of the biggest guys I ever coached. He is not only tall but has a good frame on him. He can really move, has tremendous quickness, a great ability to run to the ball and great pursuit. He is a real student of the game and takes pride being a total football player. His forte

will be rushing the passer. He is going to have to work on getting more size and strength to be able to play the run consistently. He has long arms which keeps offensive lineman off of you. He has great habits in the weight room. I am excited once he gets involved at NU with their training table and weight room and see how big he can get. I can see him getting up to 280 pounds and still being able to move really well. He had 56 tackles, 13 TFL, 5 sacks and 6 quarterback hurries this past season. He also played a little tight end and caught two touchdowns. The Nebraska coaches talked about wanting to attack on defense and that fits DaiShon's style of play to a tee."

**Do you think DaiShon has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"I personally think he needs a year to get stronger because it is a whole different level in college. But he is going to do whatever he can to get on the field right away. If he were to play as a freshman, I can see him being a pass rush specialist. He is a mentally tough kid so he will be ready in that regard."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

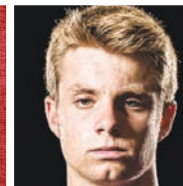
"He has done a lot of coaching and understands what it takes. He is as down to earth as it gets. He is a football guy."

By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports

## CLASS OF 2015

# JORDAN OBER

Long Snapper • Las Vegas, Nev. • Bishop Gorman H.S.



2-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 11

**Height:** 6-1; **Weight:** 183

**Analysis:** Ober was at the right place at the right time to receive a scholarship offer. Nebraska was in need of a long snapper and found Ober who played for Bishop Gorman, a traditional high school powerhouse. Ober also got great teaching from Chris Rubio at the Rubio Long Snapping camp. Here is a review by Rubio: "Handles pressure as well as anyone in the country and is very smooth with his snapping on punts and pats. He is quick on his feet and shows very good athleticism. The bigger he gets, the better he will be in the long run. Type of long snapper that is always improving. Great head on his shoulders."

**Ober Quotes:** "I was thinking about all my options and this one felt the best. I felt like I fit right in with the team and the coaches were great, they treated me great, and even random people in Lincoln were nice. I just felt at home. I liked it a lot. The football was a no-brainer."

**Chose NU Over:** No other offers (preferred walk-on offers from Arizona State, Boise State and San Jose State)

**High School Head Coach Tony Sanchez on what kind of player and person is Jordan?**

"He never botched a snap for us. It was never an issue on whether you could count on Jordan. He was the best one we ever had here. He was also our third-string receiver. I think he didn't get an offer sooner was because of his size. Usually colleges like kids that are around 6-1, 215 to 200-pound range. But you are not allowed to hit the long snapper while he is snapping the ball. Being a receiver will help Jordan cover punts because he should do well at open field tackling."

**Do you think Jordan has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"Anyone who coaches football or knows a lot about the game, knows that the most important part of special teams is the punt team. Any mistake by them can be very detrimental to the team. If you don't notice a long snapper during the game, it is probably a good thing. And on field goals, if you miss one of those because of a bad snap it could cost you the game. So if you have a great long snapper then you don't have to worry about it. Jordan is aware that he might be out there the first game of the season as a true freshman for Nebraska."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

"I have not personally met with coach Riley. We have a kid at Oregon State who played for coach Riley the last couple of years. He said nothing but good things about coach Riley and his staff."

*By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports*



Photo courtesy of Bishop Gorman High School

## DEVINE OZIGBO

Running Back • Sachse, Texas • Sachse High School



3-star recruit

247Sports Rating: 56

**Height: 5-11; Weight: 225**

**Analysis:** Ozigbo is not the style of running back the previous coaching staff would have recruited. They liked the smaller scat back type of runner, which served them well with Ameer Abdullah. But the new staff seems to like a bigger back who can catch the ball well out of the backfield. Ozigbo fits that description perfectly. He has an opportunity to come in right away and provide a different look than what the Huskers currently have in the running back stable.

**Chose NU Over:** Iowa State, Boise State, Iowa, Miami Fla., Minnesota, Mississippi State, Kansas State, Kansas, Illinois

**Ozigbo Quotes:** "I met with coach (Reggie) Davis and they were pleasantly surprised with my size and they think I'm versatile with the way I catch the ball. Hopefully if I keep working, I can come in and get early playing time."

**High School Head Coach Mark Behrens on what kind of player and person is Devine?**

"Devine is just as good a person as he is a football player. We call him gym rat because he won't leave. He is a very focused and passionate individual. There is no question he is one of the top of the best players we have had here in my eleven years. He is a big running back that can run like a smaller one. He is a different back, a lot of kids that size don't have the hands like he does. The reason he didn't have over 2,000 yards rushing was we had almost 7,000 yards passing the last two years. Devine was very involved in our passing game and probably has some of the best hands on the team."

**Do you think Devine has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"Well, he's got a man's body right now, so he should be able to play right away if they need him. His running style will have to change in college because that level is faster than high school. He will have to lower his head and find that crease and explode more."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

"From what I have heard he is a good guy. I never met him personally. But Devine has always liked Nebraska and they historically have always been a good running back school. So when they offered him late and their running back coach came down to recruit him, he was excited about it."

By Shane G. Gilster/  
Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports



Photo courtesy of Sachse High School

# ANTONIO REED

Safety • Memphis, Tenn. • Southaven High School



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 149



Bob Bakken/DeSoto Times-Tribune

**Height:** 6-2; **Weight:** 210

**Analysis:** The Husker coaching staff was looking for versatile athletes to be able to move around on defense. Reed was one of the least recruited players in this class but he fits the bill for what NU is looking for which is a guy that can play linebacker and safety in different defensive sets.

**Chose NU Over:** Memphis

**Reed Quotes:** "I like the tradition of the defense there. To be one of the Blackshirts is one of the greatest things. I didn't really think about the change in coaches. I just thought it would be good to come in fresh and not know anybody. They told me I would be a defensive athlete, that's all they said. Wherever I can fit into the defense is where I will play." -

Courtesy of Bob Bakken Desoto Times Tribune. "Their graduation rate is pretty high at Nebraska and academics come first. They (NU) like me as a defensive athlete, and I don't really care because I can play anything. I want to come in and play to compete for a starting spot as a freshman."

**High School Head Coach Ed Rich on what kind of player and person is Antonio?**

"I'm proud of the work he did in, both in the classroom and on the field, to get this day (Signing Day). I have all the confidence in the world. His football IQ and situational IQ in football is really good. I think he will fit in fine." - Courtesy of Bob Bakken Desoto Times Tribune

By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports

**MATT SNYDER**

Tight End • San Ramon, Calif. • California High School



3-star recruit

247Sports Rating: 30



Photo by Phillip Walton

**Height: 6-5; Weight: 245**

**Analysis:** Mike Riley likes to use tight ends in his offense so getting Snyder in this class will help with Nebraska's transition to involve that position more in the passing game. NU was also thin at the tight end spot so Snyder could have an opportunity to play as a true freshman. What stands out about Snyder is his versatility. He also played defense in high school and could be a solid defensive end in college.

**Chose NU Over:** Michigan, California, Oregon State, Colorado State, Fresno State

**Snyder Quotes:** "He (Mike Riley) told me thank you and was super excited to know I was a hundred percent in, then he talked to my mom and told her thank you and he was just really happy. There are a lot of great things about Nebraska and I don't want to go on and on about it, but to be short it felt like home and I was feeling great. I'm excited to come play there."

**High School Head Coach Eric Billeci on what kind of player and person is Matt?**

"He is the biggest recruit in this school's history. He is in an elite class. He

was our team captain and MVP, he has a GPA just under 4.0, so he is just a wonderful kid in all facets. We were mostly place-action on offense so Matt was a good run blocker and caught the ball for big plays when we threw it to him. He isn't a Jimmy Graham type where he can be like a wide receiver. He is more of a dual threat tight end where he run blocks and then goes out for passes."

**Do you think Matt has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"He is big enough being just under 250 pounds it will come down to the depth Nebraska has at tight end and the transition to college but I don't see why he couldn't play right away."

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

"He is a pretty mellow-mannered head coach... he is never really up or down, just even keeled. Oregon State has always recruited this area so Riley is known and well-liked." defense but he adjusts to the talent he has. That is a great hallmark for a college coach to have."

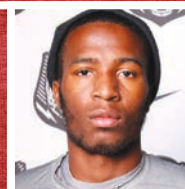
By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports



## CLASS OF 2015

# ADRIENNE TALAN

Athlete • Davie, Fla. • Charles W. Flanagan High School



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 80



Photo courtesy of Charles W. Flanagan High School

**Height: 6-1; Weight: 195**

**Analysis:** Another versatile defender who looks to play outside linebacker for the Huskers. Talan's recruitment heated up at the end of the process with TCU and Pittsburgh making strong cases for themselves. Nebraska was able to hold on and really get a player that fits their attacking style of play on defense very well. Talan is a guy that will make plays all over the field.

**Chose NU Over:** TCU, Pittsburgh, Temple, Oregon State, Cincinnati, Iowa, Florida Atlantic, Purdue, Marshall

**Talan Quotes:** "The thing I love about Nebraska is the tradition they have and the facilities – everything I need will be right there for me. I built a relationship with coach (Trent) Bray, who went from Oregon State to Nebraska this offseason. He told me just to stay with him through the process and he got the job at Nebraska, and I went. I'm not a big-city type of guy. Nebraska is a small college town. Everybody just loves football over there." – Courtesy of David Furones

**High School Head Coach Devin Bush on what kind of player and**

**person is Adrienne?**

"Nebraska got a guy who loves to play football and is exceptionally gifted on the defensive side. He possesses the power, speed and intensity you want. I can see him getting up to 220 to 225-pounds and be a hard hitting linebacker... he might even get ejected from a couple of games because he hits so hard. He played middle linebacker for us and erased a lot of plays. He could cover receivers and run with the best of them. He has the ability to read and diagnose plays. His pastime is watching film and scouting the other team. Adrienne is a quiet, shy kid... you wouldn't know that he is so violent on the field. He needs to do what he needs to do to be successful. I would compare Adrienne to Eric Striker from Oklahoma."

**Do you think Adrienne has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

"He will just go there to train and compete. He will give it his best whether he redshirts or not. He will not complain if he redshirts."

*By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports*

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# AARON WILLIAMS

Safety • Atlanta, Ga. • Carver High School



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 42

**Height:** 5-11; **Weight:** 183

**Analysis:** When looking at this Husker recruiting class, Williams gets overshadowed by Colorado defensive backs Eric Lee Jr. and Avery Anderson. But NU fans should not underestimate this heady safety and could surprise many by playing as a true freshman this fall. Nebraska needs to shore up their secondary and with a heightened importance on special teams, Williams just might be the perfect candidate to help out with both.

**Chose NU Over:** Notre Dame, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Washington State, Cincinnati, Duke, Indiana, Purdue, Kansas State

**Williams Quotes:** “Coach Riley is a laid back cat. He’s a real smooth guy. That’s what I’d call it. I wasn’t too concerned whoever I was going to play for and it really wasn’t going to affect me but I liked him.”

**High School Head Coach Darren Myles on what kind of player and person is Aaron?**

“He is a great person, very coachable and got along with his teammates, coaches and teachers. In terms of a player, he was outstanding. He played as a freshman and solidified a starting position at the free safety spot. He not only played but earned All-Region honors as a freshman. As a junior and senior he also played some strong safety, was a receiver for us on offense, and ran a little wildcat from the quarterback position. I would liken his style of play to Brian Dawkins (former NFL great) or Major Wright who was an All-SEC safety at Florida and is still playing in the NFL. It was real important that Aaron enrolled early at Nebraska because I think he needs to put on a little more weight. He has always played bigger than what he is. He plays with reckless abandon but with more weight he will be able to wreck things a little more. We knew Aaron was going to be a D1 player when he was just a sophomore.”

**Do you think Aaron has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

“He has the mental attributes to do it. A lot of times the strongest or fastest player doesn’t always get on the field right away. It is the player that blows the least amount of assignments. Aaron is such a smart athlete who understands his role as a safety, which will help separate himself from the other freshmen.”

**What was your impression of NU coach Mike Riley?**

“I have never meet coach Riley but our FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) representative James West played for Riley while he was in Canada. James spoke very highly of Riley which helped keep Nebraska in the hunt to keep Aaron. When Riley got the job at Nebraska, James called and talked to him about Aaron.”

By Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports



247Sports



## CLASS OF 2015

# DEDRICK YOUNG

Athlete • Peoria, Ariz. • Centennial High School



3-star recruit  
247Sports Rating: 49

**Height: 6-1; Weight: 215**

**Analysis:** Young has the makings of a very solid linebacker who should see the field as a true freshman. The need for linebacker help has made recruiting this position for the 2015 class a high priority. Young will have a leg up on his fellow Husker recruits as he is already enrolled and will go through spring practices.

**Young Quotes:** “Whatever they want me to be at is what I’ll do. They said they might want me at 225 or 230. I think I can use my speed and go sideline-to-sideline. I’m versatile and can cover people and play like that too. I’m just going to go in there and compete with everyone. I’m trying to play as early as possible.”

**Chose NU Over:** Arizona State, Arizona, Washington, California, Michigan State, UCLA

**High School Head Coach Richard Taylor on what kind of player and person is Dedrick?**

“I have been the head coach here since 1990 and Dedrick is the strongest player that we ever had here in school history. He is also one the best captains we ever had here. He is an excellent student and a great teammate. I’m not sure you can find a student or teacher at Centennial that would have one bad thing to say about Dedrick. I can see him playing offense or defense... it depends on where you need him at. I was talking to one recruiter who asked me where Dedrick would want to play. I said Dedrick is going to play where you want him to play. With his size and speed he would be really good as an inside runner but on defense he can cover receivers.”

**Do you think Dedrick has a chance to play as a true freshman or should he redshirt?**

“Physically he is ready to play. Emotionally I think he is ready. But socially is something that time will tell. Whether or not he feels that he is a part of the team and is ready to contribute.”

**What was your impression of NU head coach Mike Riley?**

“Coach Riley always recruits our school and I know him pretty well.”

By Shane G. Gilster/  
Huskers Illustrated & 247Sports



Photo courtesy of Speed of Light Photography



# RECRUITING NOTEBOOK

Compiled by Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated

## QUICK HITS

Who is Nebraska's best recruit? Who is the sleeper? Were there any surprises? Those are just some of the questions we look to answer in our "Quick Hits" of this 2015 recruiting class.

### Class headliner

This was really a toss-up between Eric Lee Jr., Jalin Barnett and the Davis twins. But if you look at the national ratings and who offered, you can't go wrong selecting Barnett (pictured top right). With offers from the likes of Alabama, this monster offensive lineman could have gone anywhere he wanted to.

### Nice steal

Nebraska was looking for athletic linebackers and Mohamed Barry (bottom right) fits the mold. A one-time Kansas State commit, Barry had no intention to commit to Nebraska. He just wanted to have some fun on his recruiting visit to Lincoln, but his attitude soon changed and couldn't believe what NU had to offer. Shortly thereafter he switched his commitment to the Big Red.

### Diamond in the rough

There are a handful here but Alex Davis has that raw potential and if he is molded and coached up enough, he could develop into something great at the defensive end position. NU head coach Mike Riley likes Davis's range and athletic ability and is looking forward to developing him. "We like those kinds of bodies to work with," Riley said.

### Under the radar

If there was one recruit that wasn't on any of the recruiting services' radar, it was Antonio Reed. His name came out of left field when it was discovered he was going to visit Nebraska the last weekend before Signing Day. "He was on Charlton's (Warren) radar," NU head coach Mike Riley said.

### Surprise Offer

We knew Nebraska wasn't very strong at the long snapper position but that is a position where a targeted walk-on usually gets and then starts for the next four years. But new special teams coach Bruce Read saw this as a priority and wanted to offer a full-ride scholarship to shore up that area of need. "I've got the best evaluator of specialists out of anybody," Riley said of Read. His track record on doing this is outstanding. We just want to make sure we're really good there. That's why we scholarship them."

### Biggest decommitment

Most people may say running back Kendall Bussey but we will

say Willie Sykes. The once Washington State commitment flipped to Nebraska after his official visit to Lincoln. Then Arkansas made a run at Sykes and even though he didn't take a visit to Fayetteville, he made the switch to the Razorbacks. A first-team All-Texas defensive back, Sykes would have been a big-time addition for NU and potentially could have seen the field as a true freshman.

### Last minute surprise

Adrienne Talan turned quiet when it got close to National Signing Day. Some thought he was NU's to lose because of the lack of competition Nebraska was up against but then came late offers from Pittsburgh and TCU. Optimism started to wane a bit in Huskerland as rumor had it Talan was favoring the Horned Frogs. It wasn't until Talan put on the Nebraska hat and announced his decision on Signing Day that NU could breathe a sigh of relief.

## EXTRA POINTS

There are always interesting stories from the recruiting trail and this past one was no different. Here are a few noteworthy ones...

### Stay out of Oklahoma?

The state of Oklahoma has produced some great players over the years. But for Nebraska, it was hard to recruit the state during the storied NU vs. OU rivalry.

The Huskers first-ever high school recruit for the Sooner state was 1988 class member Vic Stachmus, who was a lineman from McAlester. A year later, NU got its second Oklahoma player, when a future college and NFL great signed with the 1989 recruiting class. He was Lawton's Will Shields, who was the Oklahoma lineman-of-the-year.

After that Nebraska started to recruit the Sooner state more and more, helped by the decline of OU's football program which was hurting from NCAA probation. But the Sooners were able to recover when head coach Bob Stoops took over the football program.

Since then here has been a steady decline in Husker recruits from that state but NU still was able to pull some out namely a highly-ranked linebacker named Phillip Dillard from Tulsa in 2005. Then the recruitment of Oklahoma seemed to stop for NU under Bo Pelini.

Under Pelini, Nebraska never signed a player from the state and you just didn't hear any recruiting buzz of NU coaches in Oklahoma. The reason why? Well this could be the answer...

"I think Pelini had an agreement with Stoops that he wouldn't come recruit Oklahoma," said assistant coach Ryan Breeze of Lawton High School. "We have been trying like heck to get a hold of Nebraska and





they just wouldn't respond to any of our emails or calls."

Remember that Lawton was the school Shields came from as well as another Husker great Mike Minter. So if there was any high school in Oklahoma that had a good history with NU, it was them.

Now Breeze is happy to renew that Lawton pipeline to Nebraska as NU assistant coach Mike Cavanaugh has a strong relationship with Lawton coaches. It has already paid off with the signing of offensive line recruit Jalin Barnett and will likely continue to do so in the future.

### War with the Wolverines

Nebraska went head to head with conference rival Michigan on three recruits. NU was able to win that battle 2 recruits to 1 but it was tense especially when new Wolverine head coach Jim Harbaugh came calling.

The recruits they were fighting over were Reuben Jones, Matt Snyder and DaiShon Neal. NU lost out on Jones but signed Snyder and Neal.

Jones said in interviews with 247Sports, that he didn't feel a solid connection with Nebraska's new staff. So after his visit to Michigan he committed to the Wolverines.

There were reports that Snyder was 50/50 between Nebraska and Michigan but the long-standing relationship with NU head coach Mike Riley eventually won him over to the Huskers.

But the most interesting battle was with Neal. From an interview with Sharp & Benning in the Morning on 1620 the zone in Omaha, the Neal family was impressed with Michigan on an in-home visit until defensive line coach Greg Mattison made a remark that was a game changer.

"Michigan was a powerhouse, they came in and they stormed us. But they made one bad statement and it was over," said Neal's father, Abraham Hoskins Jr. "They said without football, DaiShon wouldn't be able to go to Michigan. Like we couldn't afford to send him there, or that we couldn't get him in academically. Once he said that, we pretty much escorted him out of the house."

Hoskins went on to say that they were leaning towards Michigan, saying "What if he (DaiShon) never played again in his life, that degree could have taken him anywhere."

Riley has no hard feelings with Harbaugh and Michigan coming after some of Nebraska's commitments.

"That was fun," Riley said of the recruiting battle. I've now got two good friends that are coaching in the same conference, Paul Chryst (Wisconsin) and Jim Harbaugh. I've been in all kinds of situations in my life as a coach. I even coached against my dad in the Canadian league. So I've seen it all.

"What I always try to do is enjoy it, but we also always want to win. It's going to be part of the scene for a while. Jim and Paul are really competitive, like many coaches are. I kind of go from that and I take a step back and just remember what we're doing here. We're talking about our school, our program, our state and what we've got, and we'll take it up against anyone. "

## HI'S TOP 5

# TO REDSHIRT OR NOT TO REDSHIRT?



### 1 ERIC LEE JR., CB

One of the highest-rated recruits in the class, Lee Jr. just has the look of a player who can start right now in the defensive backfield for Nebraska. NU needs help at safety, corner, and nickel, and Lee Jr. can do them all. He also has enrolled early and being able to be a part of spring practices should only increase his stock to play immediately.

### 2 DEDRICK YOUNG, LB

The linebacker position at Nebraska was a weak link last season. Injuries and mental breakdowns were glaring and cost NU dearly in games. So Riley and his coaching staff made recruiting linebackers a priority in this class. They ended up signing seven but Young is the one that we pegged to have the best chance to forgo a redshirt year. Expect him to be at least in the two-deep when depth charts are released in August.

### 3 JORDAN OBER, LS

A long snapper rarely gets a full-ride scholarship offer unless he is expected to start right away. Nebraska special teams coach Bruce Read didn't feel this position was solidified with what he currently has on the roster. So expect to see Ober snapping as the starter when the Huskers take on BYU.

### 4 MATT SNYDER, TE

Mike Riley likes to throw to the tight end in his offense and Nebraska didn't under the previous coaching staff. NU doesn't have a lot of options right now at that position so Snyder can come in and get some meaningful reps. This was one recruit Riley was very high on for quite a while. "He is exactly what we're looking for in that position," he said. "And that is always a hard position to find. He's (Snyder) a special breed and was a high (recruiting) priority for a long time."

### 5 AARON WILLIAMS, S

Like Lee Jr. and Young, Williams is an early enrollee which helps a new player immensely if he is able to go through spring practice. Williams seems to be underrated but has the talent and football IQ to break into the Husker secondary as a safety and also become a special teams main-stay in his first season.

# RECRUITING NOTEBOOK

Compiled by Shane G. Gilster/Huskers Illustrated

247SPORTS

WEST  
I M N W

BIG  
TEN

EAST  
Ψ M M R

## Composite Team Rankings

Team	Recruits	5 Stars	4 Stars	3 Stars	Avg	Points
1. Ohio State	27	1	14	11	90.06	279.83
2. Penn State	25	0	13	12	89.05	250.00
3. Michigan State	21	0	5	16	87.66	221.80
4. <b>Nebraska</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>85.89</b>	<b>204.86</b>
5. Wisconsin	20	0	2	17	85.62	198.23
6. Michigan	14	0	6	8	87.82	194.86
7. Illinois	24	0	2	18	83.50	182.01
8. Maryland	18	0	2	15	84.72	181.50
9. Indiana	22	0	0	22	84.19	175.82
10. Northwestern	20	0	0	19	84.00	174.34
11. Rutgers	25	0	1	21	82.95	171.46
12. Iowa	21	0	1	19	83.11	168.52
13. Minnesota	24	0	0	24	82.94	165.56
14. Purdue	26	0	0	18	81.83	164.54

## National Composite Team Rankings

Team	Total	5	4	3	Avg	Points
1. Alabama	24	6	14	4	93.72	311.08
2. USC	26	4	14	8	92.83	310.44
3. Florida State	20	4	10	6	92.46	286.76
4. Tennessee	29	1	15	12	89.78	286.16
5. LSU	25	2	11	10	89.98	285.92
6. Ohio State	27	1	14	11	90.06	279.83
7. UCLA	20	3	11	6	91.94	278.54
8. Clemson	25	3	9	11	89.48	278.16
9. Auburn	27	1	19	7	90.63	277.95
10. Georgia	28	2	11	15	89.65	274.98
11. Texas	29	1	13	14	89.46	272.52
12. Texas A&M	25	3	11	11	89.93	270.51
13. Notre Dame	24	0	14	10	90.25	268.59
14. Penn State	25	0	13	12	89.05	250.00
15. Oklahoma	24	0	10	14	88.83	248.23
16. Oregon	22	1	6	15	88.72	245.79
17. Ole Miss	22	0	7	15	88.64	245.31
18. Miss. State	28	0	7	21	87.67	239.02
19. South Carolina	30	0	10	19	87.00	236.78
20. Arizona State	22	0	8	14	87.99	233.78
21. Florida	21	2	3	16	87.23	228.39
22. Mich. State	21	0	5	16	87.66	221.80
23. Arkansas	23	0	7	16	86.85	221.02
24. Stanford	22	0	5	17	86.97	220.45
25. Missouri	23	1	2	19	86.48	217.02
31. <b>Nebraska</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>85.89</b>	<b>204.86</b>



## THE PITCH

During his National Signing Day press conference, Mike Riley was open and forthcoming when it came to talking about recruiting. Something that his predecessor was not. But he did praise the previous coaching staff for targeting and recruiting kids who wanted to come to Nebraska.

"I was impressed with the work that Bo's (Pelini) staff did with these kids and was really impressed by the film we saw and the people that we met in that next part of the process," Riley said. "All we had to do was to introduce ourselves and see if we were the right fit for the kids. But I think that says a lot for this place and we're proud to have kept most of those commitments. I am going to give Nebraska credit again because I think those kids wanted to come to Nebraska."

Riley had one thing going for him in trying to retain and recruit new kids to Nebraska. He was hired in early December which gave him a jump start over some of the other coaches that got new jobs later.

"One week is an advantage," Riley said. "I had that week to get right on some of those kids. The first thing that came to mind was there were three guys that were not only committed but they were mid-year enrollees. Avery Anderson, Aaron Williams, and Eric Lee. So those were guys that I had to see right off the bat because they only had a few weeks before they were supposed to be on campus."

After Riley visited the mid-year enrollees, he made a trip to Blue Springs, Missouri to talk to Carlos and Khalil Davis and then on to New Orleans and saw Stanley Morgan.

"So I think that was a really good start," he said. "I was very impressed with the families, with the kids, and very excited after that week with the guys I got to meet. So right off the bat we got that group of guys and I felt great about it."

But just because Riley went to visit the Nebraska commits,



didn't mean they were all going to stick with the Huskers. Riley at times had to be the recruit as well as the recruiter.

"Those kids just wanted to know if we were going to be the right fit for them. They became the evaluators. That was our big job of going out and meeting them and telling them and educating them about who we were and what our plans were. This has been our history of what we have done with young men. Then you let it go from there."

But Nebraska was lucky it chose a head coach like Riley to work through the early stages and get the recruits and their families familiar with him and his staff.

"The thing you have to do immediately, which is the best that you can, is to calm everybody down and say this is going to be all right, but it's not easy. We made it a real concerted effort to go out and say we want you to come and this is why you chose the great place and this is who we are, this is it, and hope that we mesh," Riley explained.

Riley had to sell himself but he didn't have to sell the 'N' on his jacket. That part at least was an easy sell for him when he walked into a recruit's living room.

"The brand of Nebraska in itself is the part that you don't have to learn much about. Those of us that are in it know history and this place has as good a history as any place in the country. That combination to me is easy," Riley said.

"I think kids and especially parents also look at the big picture of going to college and what does this university have to offer. This is where Nebraska is off the charts. The resources for young men here, academic support, life skills, nutrition... just go down the line in all of those things and it is at a high, high level. So they're joining a place that really knows what it is talking about when it is talking about student athletes and what you can accomplish here."

## REWIND

### Louisiana's Best Chose Huskers

In 1987, Tyrone Hughes was the Louisiana offensive player-of-the-year at St. Augustine High School in New Orleans. Playing in a run-oriented offense, Hughes, who lined up as a wingback, rushed 62 times for 845 yards, caught 20 passes for 601 yards and scored 22 TD's from his wingback position. He also averaged 40.4 yards on nine kickoffs, returning three for touchdowns.

"I was a receiver but during my senior year we installed the 'Delta Ware Wing-T' formation on offense," Hughes said. "Burton Burns who used to play at Nebraska came in and implemented it. I was the key guy in this offense which helped turn my senior season into a breakout year for me."

In the mid-80's Nebraska had success recruiting the state of Louisiana. They were able to get the state offensive and defensive players of the year in 1986 with Mickey Joseph and Reggie Cooper and before them Neil Smith and LeRoy Etienne.

"Jack Pierce (former NU assistant coach) was the main reason why Nebraska got me to come there. He was one heck of a recruiter," Hughes said. "I was sold on Nebraska the day I met him. Jack was excited about what he was doing. He sold the school by being honest

with you. He looked you in the eye and you just knew what kind of man he was."

The top five colleges for Hughes were Nebraska, LSU, Oklahoma, Minnesota and Tulane. But in the end it came down to the Huskers and the in-state favorite Tigers.

"My mom liked Nebraska because of Jack Pierce but my dad wanted me to go to LSU. He was a car salesman at the time and he would get a lot of pressure from his co-workers to get me to go to LSU. They would put up signs at his dealership that read 'Hodson to Hughes.'" (Tommy Hodson was LSU's starting quarterback)

Hughes said the reasons for him picking NU over the Tigers were Pierce and what some of the players at LSU told him. "Some of the star players at LSU helped deter me from going there. They told me not to go there because of how some of the players were treated after they left."

So Hughes became a Husker and Nebraska got a big-time threat not only on offense but on special teams as well. After redshirting his first year in 1988, Hughes established himself as a kick returner more than a receiver.

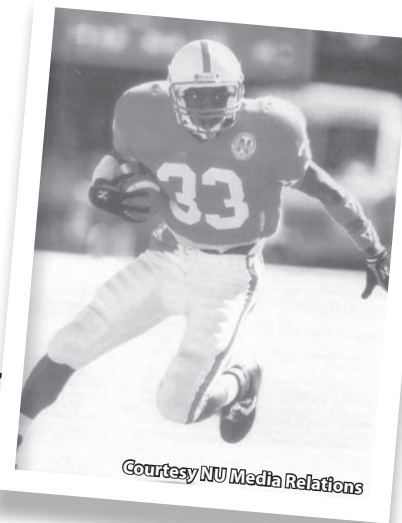
He won the Big Eight punt-return title and was seventh in the nation as a redshirt freshman, and then as a sophomore he led the Big Eight and ranked third in the nation in kickoff returns with a 29.1 average. Hughes set the Nebraska single-season record with 523 kickoff-return yards, which included a big game against Kansas State when he returned three kicks for 151 yards, including a 99-yard touchdown. The 151 yards and average of 51.0, set NU single-game records. Hughes also tied an NCAA record with 247 yards on eight kick returns (punt and kickoff).

Hughes has no regrets coming to Nebraska. As a receiver he would have liked more passing implemented into the offense but it was a great experience overall.

"Being a black kid from New Orleans coming to Midwest America was a culture shock," Hughes said. "There were times I was the only black kid in an auditorium classroom but I didn't feel that way though. So I really encourage kids to get away to go to college and experience different cultures."

If it wasn't for Pierce, Hughes wouldn't have experienced the culture at Nebraska and would have made his dad's co-workers happy on National Signing Day.

Tyrone Hughes, former Husker wingback, set NU and NCAA records for kick returns.



Courtesy NU Media Relations



BY MICHAEL BRUNTZ

# STATE OF THE HUSKERS

## December visits helped Riley secure his first class



Read daily Husker reports from Michael Bruntz at [HuskersIllustrated.com](http://HuskersIllustrated.com)  
Follow him on Twitter @michaelbruntz

**IF YOU'RE A HEAD COACH** taking over a new program, the list of things you have to do from day one is a long one.

When a coach is hired in December, with one week left before a month-long recruiting dead period, as Mike Riley was, that list gets put aside as you get to work trying to retain a recruiting class.

Riley signed his first recruiting class of 20 players on Feb. 4 – almost two months after he was formally announced as head coach on Dec. 4. Riley hit the road recruiting for the first time a few days after being announced, and the work he did over a five-day stretch helped to solidify Nebraska's class.

Riley was under pressure. He hit the road recruiting five days before the start of a recruiting dead period where college coaches can't have face-to-face contact with recruits in their homes or on campus.

"We had to make an initial plan right on getting the job," Riley said during his signing day press conference. "Right when we could go out, what are we going to do here? The first thing that came to mind was there were three guys that were not only committed but they were mid-year enrollees."

Riley had three early enrollees who were set to be on campus in January, and he stopped to see defensive backs Eric Lee and Avery Anderson in Colorado.

The pair committed a day apart from one another last year and had been the longest-tenured commits in Nebraska's class, also helping to recruit other players.

Lee and Anderson didn't initially reaffirm their pledges to join Nebraska's class, but a day after meeting with Lee, and the same night he met Anderson, both players called Riley and told him they wanted to be Huskers. They also wanted to know how they could help grow the class.

"He seemed like a player's coach," Anderson said after his in-home visit. "Someone that really cares about guys. He got me comfortable with the way he takes care of his guys. He seemed like a really good man, and somebody who has the best interest for his guys."

Next, Riley visited twin defensive linemen Khalil Davis and Carlos Davis in Kansas City. Missouri was beating down the door for the talented defensive linemen, and Riley visited the twins, their high school coach and also reached out to the twins' uncle Lorenzo Hicks, a former Husker player.

The visit was an important one, and Nebras-

ka's assistant coaches were able to lock up the twins' commitments in mid-January and keep the home state Tigers from moving in.

Riley continued his trip east, stopping in Atlanta and locking in defensive back Aaron Williams, before doubling back and seeing wide receiver Stanley Morgan in New Orleans. That first week was key in securing Nebraska's recruiting class – Five days. Six recruits.

How did Riley, who had likely been in Lincoln less than the recruits he was seeing, end up locking up the commits? He said he simply reminded each recruit why he committed to Nebraska in the first place.

**Both Adam Taylor and Mikale Wilbon have the goods to tote the rock for Nebraska, and with every running back starting on the same page, many are expecting a big year from Taylor and Wilbon.**

"I had that week to get right on some of those kids," Riley said. "I am going to give Nebraska credit again because I think those kids wanted to come to Nebraska. Those kids just wanted to know if we were going to be the right fit for them. They became the evaluators. That was our big job of going out and meeting them and telling them and educating them about who we were and what our plans were."

"Everybody is in uncertainty and disarray. The thing you have to do immediately the best that you can is to calm everybody down and say this is going to be all right, but it's not easy. We made it a real concerted effort to go out and say we want you to come and this is why you chose the great place and this is who we are, this is it and hope that we mesh."

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Follow him on Twitter @michaelbruntz





# INSIDE HUSKER RECRUITING

BY MICHAEL SCHAEFER  
RECRUITING EDITOR  
HUSKERSILLUSTRATED.COM

## Nebraska already thinking ahead to '16

Signing day has come and gone and Nebraska's staff is already working on 2016. Head coach Mike Riley said the staff had a few days before Wednesday to really reassess what the team looks like, what the numbers are and what the Huskers are going to pull together for the 2016 cycle.

Riley and company inherited and retained three commitments already for 2016 with four-star tackle Bryan Brokop, three-star tight end Jared Bubak and four-star offensive lineman John Raridon. That's good enough for the No. 22 in the country on the Thursday after signing day.

Barton Simmons, 247Sports director of football scouting, likes what the Huskers have inherited for the offensive line already.

"Raridon is a kid that is a big, physical, mean football player," he said. "That's exactly what you're looking for on the line of scrimmage. That's his mentality. It's toughness. He and Brokop both kind of bring that presence. They bring that physicality and when you're building Nebraska that's exactly what you want. You're going to build it from the inside out. Those guys embody the physical style of play Riley might want to institute."

The big unknown right now is what to expect from Riley and staff on the recruiting trail for an entire cycle. Steve Wiltfong, 247Sports national director of recruiting, isn't sure where Nebraska will slot in for a year, but calls it an important class for Riley.

"I've had a wait and see opinion on the hire," he said. "Mike Riley had some success at Oregon State and for Nebraska he wasn't a wow hire but sometimes the best hires aren't wow hires when you're reflecting on it. I just think Nebraska needs a guy that's going to be very involved on the recruiting trail as a head coach. When it's all said and done, you're talking about championship caliber teams and good teams, I think the differences are the

Jims and Joes. Being a good evaluator, being able to develop guys and being energetic about recruiting. Nebraska has to be all three to compete for championships. There's not a lot of guys considered Nebraska leans before the recruiting process starts. They gotta get to work."

The Huskers finished the 2015 cycle with a Top 35 class but Simmons said it's likely for Nebraska to see a recruiting bump based on a coaching change.

"Often a head coaching move is made when a team has poor seasons," he said. "So there's new energy, new optimism but Nebraska has all of that now and maybe without the negativity that was there with the previous regime. It's a little unique with Nebraska because there was already plenty of success. I think that makes it more compelling as a place to be. You don't have to turn a blind eye. You can be encouraged by the success that they've had and be encouraged by the energy of the new staff. I definitely think Nebraska is in line for success for the 2016 cycle."

### Social Media Mavericks

One thing fans have picked up on since Riley and staff have come to Nebraska has been an increased social media presence. The coach joked at his signing day press conference that if you didn't realize he adored social media, then you just might not know anything about him at all.

Over the final three weeks Nebraska fans were treated to a reveal of the curtains with detailed looks at where the staff was flying around the country, looks at what was transpiring for in-home visits, in-office meetings and official visits. The peek behind the curtains has long been needed at Nebraska, where things sometimes felt overly covered in secrecy.

247Sports analyst Brian Perroni covers recruiting in Texas and has quickly become familiar with Riley and his staff since their time at Oregon State. The analyst said he's not

surprised to see that side of recruiting come over to Nebraska.

"Social media and the way Nebraska uses it is a big thing," he said. "Kids like to see it. Hiding behind things and being real secretive in this day and age – I mean every thing is instantaneous – so why not own the news yourself? Coaches get commitments and tweet out something. Those get retweeted hundreds and thousands of times. That brings excitement to the fan base. Also, fans like to see when coaches are on the road, so then they know where they are out at now. It's essentially like saying 'Hey we're out here and we can't tell you who but we're here.' That's going to bring excitement to the program."

There won't be anymore painting the nation for awhile, but with junior day and spring visits coming up, Nebraska has an opportunity to really create a good sense of where things can go on Twitter, Instagram, Vine and other social media outlets.

### Covering the bases

Ryan Gunderson, one of Nebraska's chief in-house recruiting operators, said the Huskers plan to attack the 500-mile radius as much as possible. The Huskers will have coaches responsible for a certain region of the radius and that coach will be an expert on the players coming out of the area. Nebraska is going to start fast with this and in some ways already got a little bit of a jump with doing some double-time work between 2015-16 during January.

The Huskers will have to branch out. Riley talked about recruiting from sea to sea and this staff means it. There will be a lot of effort put into California, Florida, Georgia and other stops as well. One place that Nebraska will begin tapping into again like it did during its Big 12 and Big 8 days is Texas.

The Lone Star State produces a wealth of talent, and while at Oregon State, Riley was more than willing

to tap into it. Expect the Huskers to do that again. Nebraska spent a ton of time in Texas during the recruiting period. Reggie Davis spent almost three weeks in Houston and surrounding areas building up his name and the Nebraska brand. They went into schools in Dallas with regularity while waiting to do in-home visits that same night.

If this staff is going to push Nebraska to a higher level of recruiting then Texas is going to be a focal point.

"I don't know what it was that made Oregon State decide they were going to make Texas part of the bread and butter but that's going to work really well now at Nebraska because they already have the ties," he said. "They can sell here. Maybe not the guys with the Texas, Texas A&M and LSU offers, but they're going to sell on the next level. These coaches worked with James and Jaquizz Rodgers. They were under recruited and they turned into superstars. They're going to sell that in Texas because everyone knows the Rodgers brothers."

### The key for 2016

There's no question quarterback is going to be of the utmost importance for 2016. Nebraska didn't take one in the 2015 class and isn't settled on one in the foreseeable future either. That leaves the door wide open for Nebraska to take a long look at some of the top signal callers around the country. While Riley spoke of offensive line and defensive backs as gold, it stands to reason that quarterbacks are the most precious commodity in the recruiting landscape.

Wiltfong said the Huskers can really kick off its re-emergence as a national brand recruiting wise by landing the right one – which will help pull more players into the class.

"Quarterbacks help you build your class," he said. "If you have a good quarterback as the jewel of your class it is exciting. It's exciting for others."



# 2MinuteDrill

## WELCOME THE NEW COACHES



New Nebraska football coach Mike Riley addresses the Pinnacle Bank Arena crowd during halftime of the Michigan State game on Jan. 27. Behind him are assistant Mike Cavanaugh, Reggie Davis, Hank Hughes, Charlton Warren and Keith Williams.

MITCH OTTO/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED



## 2MinuteDrill

Stories by Lanny Holstein • Photos by Mitch Otto, Joe Mixan and NU Sports Information

Nebraska's new staff has a lot more to work with at Nebraska than it did at Oregon State. The transition into big time college football has been fun, but not necessarily easy, according to the man in charge of Husker recruiting, director of player personnel Ryan Gunderson.

"Where we've been, it's a sliding scale with talent and some other quality like academics or character," Gunderson said. "You've had to project not where a player is now, but how good he can be. Does he have tools? Has he been coached?"

At Nebraska, there are more ready-made players available that don't require the staff to make trade-offs, according to Gunderson. The recruiting staff doesn't have to read as many tea leaves in order to get the best players on the field.

"When you project, you have to choose from a much larger pool of candidates and pick which ones are going to rise to the top," Gunderson said. "We don't have to do that here. We can get the guys with the best talent and the best character."

New director of football and recruiting operations Andy Vaughn likes the idea of hanging with the big boys.

"When I was at Nevada and a kid was going to go on a visit to a Pac-12 school, when he went on that visit, you knew you were probably not going to see that kid again," Vaughn said. "He'll call you when it's done and say thanks for everything, but I'm going to do something else."

Nebraska is one of those big schools Vaughn was talking about, and the challenge for coaches in those positions is a little different. Instead of finding hidden gems, squabbling over the leftovers, the Husker staff has to compete with other powerhouses for the top talent.

One way both Gunderson and Vaughn tried to compete with the top schools at their previous jobs was with social media. They tried to put themselves out there for the world to see and hopefully attract a few kids through their efforts.

"You guys have been around, you know that it's a big part of how these kids communicate," Vaughn said of Twitter and Facebook. "The phone is always in your hand. That's how they interact with the world and each other. That's how they interact with us. If you're not just into it but two or three steps ahead, then you are going to fall behind."

In their short time at the helm, Gunderson and Vaughn have been instrumental in putting out maps of where each assistant coach is on a given day and trying to help fans follow their recruiting efforts. The pair also has Nebraska's coaches contributing their own posts as they search for talent.

"I think the technology and the social media side of it, there were a lot of things we wanted to do but you didn't have any help (before Nebraska)," Vaughn said. "Now we have a lab upstairs with two or three graphic artists to put out videos and apps to recruits and stuff like that."

After things have died down with the 2015 class, there will be no time to rest for Gunderson and Vaughn. It's on to 2016 and building a foundation, and that starts with getting kids on cam-

pus as early as possible, or getting Nebraska coaches out, away from Lincoln where kids can reach them.

"In June, we will do a bunch of camps on campus, two Big Red Weekends, and then later on in June we will do a bunch of satellites (camps)," Gunderson said. "I'm not sure where, but what we've talked about is getting to California, getting to Texas, getting to Atlanta, and getting to Florida."

Satellite camps require a smaller school in the region Nebraska wants to recruit to let Husker coaches work their camp as guests, getting the Huskers exposure in areas away from home.

"The issue is finding a school in those states that will let us in," Gunderson said. "Whenever a school in Texas does that, Texas, A&M, Baylor are all going to get pissed at that smaller school for letting us in."

The satellite camps are the shiny, fun angle to Nebraska's new recruiting philosophy, but the core of it is a lot closer to home.

"Our goal is to get the top players in the 500 mile radius," Gunderson said. "We aren't going to get them all, but we want to dominate. Then we want to go outside that radius and get those kids that understand Nebraska and commit not just to the name but to Nebraska."

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**"It's about selling our staff because that's what holds guys in. We will show them the stuff too, but it's the dinners, the times where the kids can see the coaching staff and the families. We need to build those relationships in person."**

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**Ryan Gunderson**  
NU Director of Player Personnel

Gunderson and Vaughn are more than just sound bites when it comes to dominating the border states. They already had a plan in place as soon as a few weeks into their time as Huskers.

"Every coach will have an area inside the 500 mile radius as his primary area and then another area outside the radius that is his secondary focus," Gunderson said. "The area inside the radius is primary for a reason. We need to know every kid in there."

That being said, the new staff has yet to get into the nitty-gritty of exactly what it wants to do in recruiting. Gunderson and Vaughn said they have plans to meet with the whole staff in the coming weeks to make a more concrete plan after scrambling to fill the initial class.

"We'll go through with each position coach and see what kind of guy he wants, what kind of intangibles," Vaughn said. "We'll put that together with our philosophy as far as the kids that we want to recruit. You want a guy to have kids that he wants to work with."

Vaughn threw out the idea of letting each coach recruit solely his own position, which would ensure each coach got his own type of guys, but said it just isn't feasible at Nebraska.

"You are too far from the major talent pools to just recruit by position," Vaughn said. "We have to develop some relationships."

It's those relationships that Nebraska is the most keen on fostering. They know they have a bunch of new toys to play with, but it still comes down to the people.

"It's about selling our staff because that's what holds guys in. We will show them the stuff too, but it's the dinners, the times where the kids can see the coaching staff and the families," Gunderson said. "We need to build those relationships in person."



## 2MinuteDrill



# Mark Banker

## DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

**N**

**The Particulars:** Banker takes over for John Papuchis as the Nebraska defensive coordinator. He held the same role at Oregon State for the previous 12 seasons and has been with Riley since 1996, when two joined forces at USC (with the exception of 2002, when Banker was at Stanford and Riley was with the Saints).

**Resume:** Banker is an experienced defensive coordinator, but he began as an offensive line and running backs coach back in 1979 at Springfield College. He quickly switched over to defense after two seasons there. Banker has spent time coaching linebackers, the secondary, and special teams at USC, Hawaii, Stanford and with the Chargers before joining the Oregon State staff for a second stint in 2003.

**Quotable:** "We've gotta earn (fans') respect and they have to earn our respect within the University of Nebraska community. We can talk about it all we want, but it's a matter of results because this business is a results oriented business, period."

**Banker on Riley:** "We have a lot in common," Banker said. "At the same time, kind of the yin and the yang. Offense and defenses are named such for specific reasons. (We're) a little bit opposite. But it's just worked. I really enjoy the consistency of the way he runs his life. What you see is what you get. There aren't any surprises."

# Trent Bray

## LINEBACKERS COACH

**N**

**The Particulars:** Bray will coach Nebraska's linebackers, a position he is very familiar with from his playing days back at Oregon State. He played under Mike Riley and defensive coordinator Mark Banker as a Beaver, and left an impression on his eventual bosses.

**Resume:** After playing for four seasons in Corvallis, Bray spent a season with the European Football League's Hamburg team in 2007. In 2009, he began his coaching career as a graduate assistant with Arizona State, eventually being moved up to linebackers coach. He left that position for the same one at Oregon State in 2012, where he's been the past three seasons.

**Quotable:** "I'm intense on the field and in the meeting rooms," Bray said. "I was like that as a player. I was calm in situations outside of it. There's a switch that has to go on when you're on the field."

**Hank Hughes Says:** "He's been involved with football since he came out of the womb, and there's something to be said for that," defensive line coach Hank Hughes said. "You can just tell that he's a serious football guy. Trent is a worker. You need as many guys who are willing to grab an oar and row the boat in the same direction. And he's one of those guys."





# Mike Cavanaugh

OFFENSIVE LINE COACH

N

**The Particulars:** Cavanaugh takes over as the Nebraska offensive line coach after spending ten seasons in the same position with Mike Riley in Corvallis. Cavanaugh was one of four holdovers from the Beaver staff that Riley brought with him.

**Resume:** Before his most recent stint at Oregon State, Cavanaugh coached in the NFL with the San Diego Chargers. He's also coached at a few other colleges, including six years as the line coach at Hawaii immediately prior to Oregon State. Cavanaugh's lines have been a part of some of the most explosive offenses even in Corvallis. Beaver running backs Yvenson Bernard and Jacquizz Rodgers each produced three 1,000-yard rushing seasons behind Cavanaugh-coached lines, and 23 of his players have earned all-conference honors in the past decade.

**Quotable:** "All I thought about (Nebraska) was great football tradition," Cavanaugh said. "I've lived in the Midwest, and I knew it was going to be cold, knew you were going to get all your seasons. But the football was the thing that jumped out – history, tradition, culture."

**A High School Coach Says:** "We just got to know (Cavanaugh) really well," Oklahoma high school coach Ryan Breeze said. "We've sent a couple of kids out (to Oregon State) with him and Coach Cav will come to a game in the fall. He'll come out for spring ball in May and we've developed a good relationship with him that way."



# Reggie Davis

RUNNING BACKS COACH

N

**The Particulars:** Davis will take over for Ron Brown with the Husker running backs. It's been a few years since he coached the position or worked with Mike Riley, but he tutored one of the best running backs in Oregon State history, Jacquizz Rodgers in his previous stint under the new Nebraska head man.

**Resume:** Davis spent the past four years with the San Francisco 49ers. He was hired away from Oregon State in 2011 to coach the 49er's tight ends and did so for three years before moving to offensive line coach this past season. Davis worked with one of the best tight ends in football in Vernon Davis while in San Francisco. Before the move to the NFL, Davis worked at Oregon State, UNLV and San Diego. He also played tight end and linebacker for Washington in college and tight end for the Chargers in the NFL.

**Quotable:** "I was actually recruited by coach Osborne here," Davis said. "I had a trip set up, but I ended up cancelling and going to the University of Washington. That was my first trip. I was going to come out here and to Wisconsin, but after I went to Washington I just fell in love with it and never took my trip out here."

**Davis' Friends Say:** "They were all excited for me," Davis said. "Those who had been in the Midwest, in this conference, or at this university, they all thought it was great and they were all excited for me."



# Hank Hughes

**DEFENSIVE LINE COACH****N**

**The Particulars:** Hughes will be the Nebraska defensive line coach in 2015 because of his relationship with defensive coordinator Mark Banker. The two coaches have never been on the same staff, but they developed a mutual respect through years of coaching conventions and through watching from afar. Riley allowed Banker to bring him on as one of the later hires.

**Resume:** Hughes is one of the more accomplished assistant coaches on the staff. In his previous two coaching stops he was the defensive coordinator and defensive line coach, first at Connecticut and then this past season at Cincinnati. Hughes called the plays and ran the defense at both stops, but he will cede those duties to focus on a position group with the Huskers. His defenses at Connecticut were top 10 against the run in 2006, 2008 and 2012. He has previous experience at Memphis and Harvard as well.

**Quotable:** "I'm excited. I've seen these guys play, seen them play on tape," Hughes said. "I wasn't watching Nebraska, but seeing the offense they were going against, I saw that they were disruptive, you know? They are game wreckers."

**Banker Says:** "He's upfront, honest, from the heart, a tough guy, a good football coach and a tenacious recruiter. We've never had a chance to work together, but I'm excited about it. Even if we did play together, I wouldn't be all for him, if he didn't have those qualities."

# Danny Langsdorf

**OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR****N**

**The Particulars:** Langsdorf will team up with head man Mike Riley to coach the quarterbacks and coordinate the Husker offense. He's worked together with Riley at Oregon State, but took a one year foray in the NFL to work with Eli Manning and the New York Giants as the quarterbacks coach this past season.

**Resume:** Langsdorf was Riley's offensive coordinator from 2005-2013. He guided an offense that produced the likes of Matt Moore, Sean Canfield and Sean Mannion at quarterback and Yvenson Bernard and Jaquizz Rodgers at running back. Langsdorf and Riley split the play calling duties throughout their time together, sometimes going week to week on who would call the game. Before OSU, Langsdorf was an assistant with the Saints and the Edmonton Eskimos of the CFL.

**Quotable:** "I'm at Nebraska for a chance to run the offense, call plays, be in charge in a place that has a lot of tradition and history," Langsdorf said. "And a place that—I don't know the place, I know the people, that is a big part of it too, being familiar with a lot of the guys."

**Riley Says:** "Danny and Mark (Banker) have one thing in common: they like football. They study football, they look for the best way to do things, and they are good examples of knowing an overall scheme. What we've done offensively with run, play action pass, and what we do personnel group-wise, (Langsdorf)'s got an idea of the big picture. And one big thing he has is he knows how to adapt. You can't put square pegs into round holes."





# Bruce Read

SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR

N

**The Particulars:** Bruce Read comes to Nebraska as one of the nation's premier special teams coaches. He has 29 years of expertise at the position and will serve in that role with the Huskers. Read has spent 14 seasons on Mike Riley coaching staffs, both at Oregon State and with the San Diego Chargers.

**Resume:** Read has been with Riley for the past six seasons at Oregon State, and he's also been with the head man in San Diego. Read also spent time with the NFL's Cowboys and Giants, and he started his coaching career with Montana in 1985. Most recently, Beaver kickers connected on 19-of-22 field goals and were perfect on PAT attempts this past season. In 2012, Jordan Jenkins earned first-team All-Pac-12 honors as a coverage specialist and OSU led the conference in field goal percentage.

**Quotable:** "We will incorporate everybody, other than the two coordinators, into special teams. Mostly for fall camp, I like to rely on the other coaches to take an area of special teams. Maybe I will rely on Reggie to work with the kickoff return on the front line, and Charlton to take three players on the kickoff team and someone else to take the four inside players on kickoff team, so we'll have a little special teams staff."

**Riley Says:** "I really trust him. I don't trust myself a lot of times evaluating a punter or a kicker," Riley said. "He has helped me, even when he was in the NFL, I would send him video, 'Look at this punter for me.'"



# Charlton Warren

DEFENSIVE BACKS COACH

N

**The Particulars:** Warren will be in his second season as the Nebraska secondary coach this upcoming season. He is the lone holdover from Bo Pelini's staff, and has a unit that returns all but safety Corey Cooper and cornerback Josh Mitchell.

**Resume:** Warren came to Nebraska a season ago after spending the entirety of his prior coaching career at Air Force. He got started as the secondary coach and recruiting coordinator there in 2005 and quickly added co-defensive coordinator to his title in 2008. He took over sole possession of the coordinating duties in 2012 and held them for two seasons before coming to Nebraska. Warren is known as a powerful recruiter.

**Quotable:** "Everybody has different philosophies," Warren said. "Personally, I think recruiting is about relationships and work ethic. At Air Force, at Nebraska, at any university, you have to build relationships with recruits and parents, and they have to trust you. And they have to trust that you have the best interest in mind both on the field and off the field. So that's what I've always been about, is building relationships and staying at it with kids."

**Riley Says:** "I'd heard many good things about him," Riley said of Warren. "Actually, a guy that reached out to me was a guy that he'd formerly worked for, Troy Calhoun. I was pretty much hit from a lot of different ways about this person, Charlton Warren. Another thing that made an impact on me as well was all these recruits wanted to know what was going to happen with coach Warren."





## 2MinuteDrill



# Keith Williams

WIDE RECEIVERS COACH

N

**The Particulars:** Williams is a passionate coach who's spent time at a couple different group-of-five schools the past six seasons. He's put a few players into the NFL and his coaching style is upbeat and fun, at least according to a few available YouTube videos going around.

**Resume:** Williams spent the past three seasons coaching the wide receivers at Tulane and was at Fresno State for three seasons prior to that. He coached current Packers wide receiver Davante Adams for a season at Fresno State and the Redskins' Ryan Grant for three seasons at Tulane. In total, he has put eight receivers into the NFL. Williams also spent a year in the NFL with the San Diego Chargers as a minority intern.

**Quotable:** "I am really excited to join coach Riley's staff and thankful for the opportunity he has given me at Nebraska," Williams said. "I have had a great respect for coach Riley's career from afar, and I'm ecstatic to be here at Nebraska and be a part of this program. This is one of those places that if you pay any attention to college football, you know about Nebraska. I have seen that 'N' my whole life."

**Riley Says:** "Keith Williams is a tremendous addition to our Nebraska staff, and brings a great background in coaching wide receivers," Riley said. "With Keith's addition, I'm excited about the completion of our full-time staff. It is a mix of quality individuals who bring great skills as teachers, coaches, mentors and recruiters."

# Ryan Gunderson

DIRECTOR OF PLAYER PERSONNEL

N

**The Particulars:** Gunderson serves as Nebraska's director of player personnel. He is in charge of player evaluations and roster management in regards to recruiting. He followed Mike Riley from Oregon State, where he was the assistant director of player personnel.

**Resume:** Gunderson is a Mike Riley guy, through and through. He actually played quarterback for the Beavers from 2003-2007, spending most of that time as a backup to Derek Anderson, Matt Moore and Sean Canfield. He was hired as an administrative graduate assistant out of college and then was elevated to assistant director of player personnel after two seasons. He takes over the full personnel responsibilities for the first time at Nebraska.

**Quotable:** "You have to project guys. Well, he's not the greatest player now, but he hasn't been coached and he's going to get a lot better. We've had to project because we're not getting the top level guys. Here, we can get the top level guys with the best grades and the best character."

**Gunderson on his role:** "Andy (Vaughn) is a little bit more on the operational execution side of things, like he's planning the visits right now. I'm more on the players, who we are recruiting and where we are going, the roster management piece. He's more the interior recruiting, and I am the exterior recruiting."





# Andy Vaughn

**DIRECTOR OF FB & RECRUITING OPERATIONS** **N**

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## **MORE** **N** **FOOTBALL STAFF**

### **Max Onyegbule**

Graduate Assistant Coach  
Assistant Defensive  
Line Coach

### **Tavita Thompson**

Graduate Assistant Coach  
Tight Ends Coach

### **Dan Van De Riet**

Associate Athletic Director  
for Football Operations

### **Mark Philipp**

Head Football  
Strength Coach

### **Hilary O'Bryan**

Assistant Director  
of Football Operations

### **Greg Vaughn**

Director of Video

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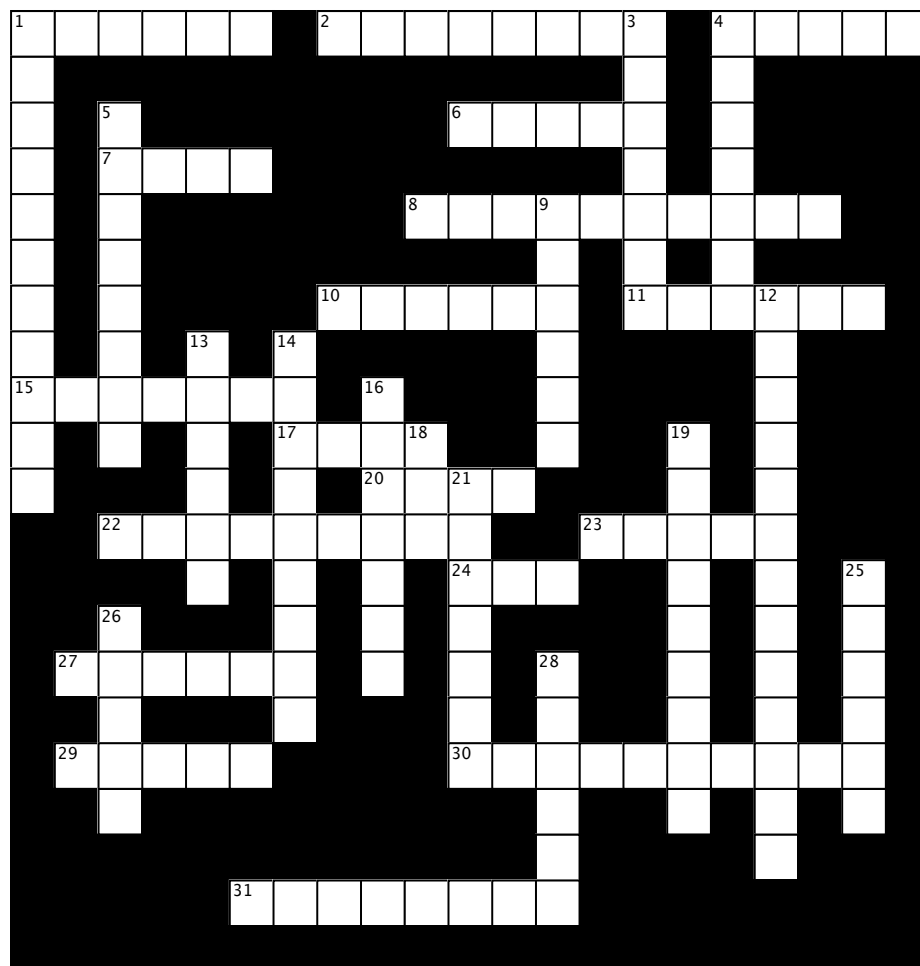
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## Crossword/Cartoon

### MARCH 2015 CROSSWORD PUZZLE



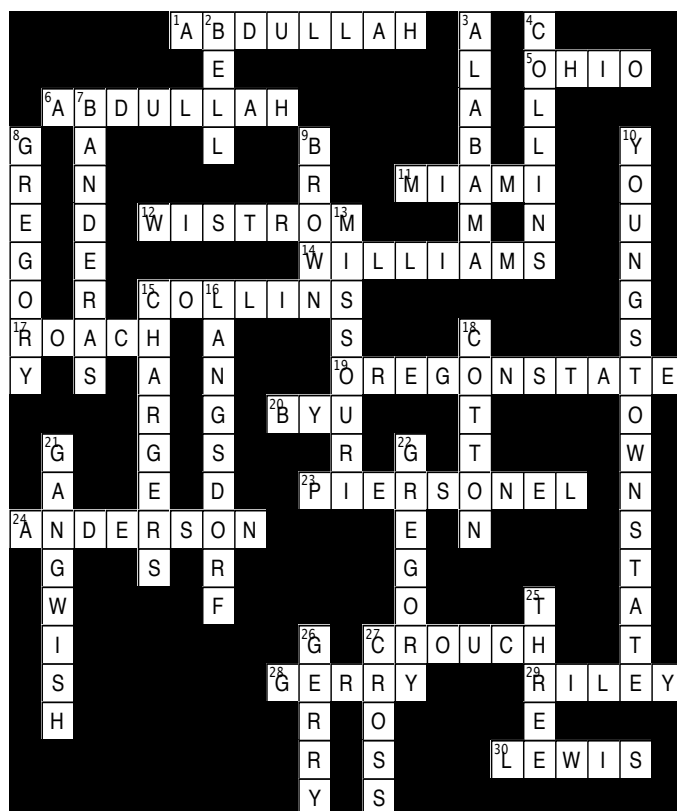
#### ACROSS

1. 2016 non-conference opponent
2. Wide receivers coach
4. 2014 leader in interceptions
6. 2015 non-conference opponent
7. Linebackers coach
8. Ex-Husker center joining NFL Hall of Fame
10. Running back in 2015 recruiting class
11. Tight end from California in 2015 recruiting class
15. Mike Riley's alma mater
17. Defensive end from Omaha in 2015 recruiting class
20. Special teams coordinator
22. Punt returner on freshman All-America team
23. Running backs coach
24. Opponent in 2015 opener
27. Defensive coordinator
29. Twins in 2015 recruiting class (last name)
30. April 11 event
31. 1971 Outland Trophy winner

#### DOWN

1. Mike Riley's former school
3. Ex-Husker guard joining NFL Hall of Fame
4. Football Writers second-team All-America defensive end
5. Most Outstanding Player in Senior Bowl
9. 1972 Lombardi Award winner
12. Mike Riley's college position
13. Secondary coach
14. Offensive coordinator
16. Offensive lineman from Oklahoma in 2015 recruiting class
18. Defensive back from Colorado in 2015 recruiting class
19. Offensive line coach
21. Ex-Husker joining College Football Hall of Fame
25. Defensive line coach
26. Late addition to 2015 recruiting class
28. Wide receiver from New Orleans in 2015 recruiting class

### FEBRUARY 2015 CROSSWORD SOLUTION





THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

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